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William Hamilton Osborne's
Masterpiece

THE BLACKJACK

A MYSTERY STORY

BY

WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

A STRANGE DETECTIVE STORY "THE WHISPERING HEAD" WILL BE THE FEATURE OF OUR NEXT NUMBER

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE BLACKJACK

A MYSTERY STORY

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

ONE of Mrs. Bellairs' women guests uttered a scream. She pointed wildly toward one of the French windows of the dining-room.

"There—there," she cried, "the face!"

She trailed off into mild hysteria. St. John, another guest, leaped to his feet. He, too, had seen the face. He darted swiftly around the end of the long table, and peered through the small square panes of glass. The face was still there. A yellow face it was, a lean and withered face, a face with piercing jet black eyes. St. John laughed. He unfastened the window at the top and bottom, turned the handle of its catch, and then wrenched the window open. He turned to the amazed assembled company.

"Mrs. Eliza Grimwood," he announced.

A scarecrow glided into the glittering room. This scarecrow wore a bonnet of the vintage of the nineties—her figure was draped with a long faded green cloak. She was tall, lean, bony. Straggling wisps of wind-blown hair criss-crossed her features. But with it all her features were good features—and her eyes were fine eyes, canny as they seemed. She made no apologies for her intrusion. She stalked to the head of the table and addressed the fascinating young hostess.

"Your new Buttons is too new for me," she exclaimed. "He didn't know Eliza Grimwood and never heard of her, and didn't care about leaving me alone with the solid silver candlesticks and your other contraptions in the hall. I hate servants anyhow, and especially new ones—everybody in Hilcrest Manor used to have old servants and they all knew me—but times have changed." With a long, lean finger she pointed to the man who sat at Mrs. Bellairs' left.

"I came to see Fiske Sargent there," she continued, "the rest of you go right ahead with your birds and bottles. No, sit still, Fiske—I've got no secrets. I can talk right here."

Mrs. Bellairs smiled and nodded to her butler. That

functionary reached for a chair, but Mrs. Eliza Grimwood beat him to it.

"I can wait upon myself, my man," she said, dragging one of Mrs. Bellairs' Chinese Chippendales to Sargent's side. The guests, winking at one another, plunged into enforced converse—each, however, with one ear open for the vocal relish that was bound to come.

"Well, Fiske," proceeded Mrs. Grimwood, pleasantly, "I haven't come to crow over you—not a bit of it. I s'pose you've seen the decision of the Court of Appeals?"

Fiske Sargent flushed—he had good cause to. But he turned his fine young face away from the woman momentarily, and addressed the other guests.

"Mrs. Grimwood," he explained, in crisp tones, "is referring to the disposition of my Grandfather Grimwood's last will. You will recall, possibly, that he made an early will in favor of Mrs. Grim—of his wife; and a later one, just before his death, leaving his estate to me. There was a close question arising over the formalities observed at the time of the execution of the later will—and the Court of Appeals has just decided——"

"What ought to have been decided two years ago," interposed Eliza Grimwood, "that a man's got a right to leave everything to his second wife—that's me. Godfrey, what'd he marry me for?"

She appealed to the Poinier girl, who sat on Mrs. Bellairs' right.

This girl's forehead was furrowed with momentary anxiety—she knew that the eyes of all the dinner crowd were turned upon her, and with cause.

"Ah, Ruthie," cried the shrill-voiced interloper, "what did Fiske Grimwood marry me for if he didn't marry me to endow me with his goods—he said so at the altar. And what'd I marry him for, Ruthie—for his money, don't you see?"

There rose a high-voiced titter from the women at this sally and an involuntary guffaw from the men.

"For his money," they repeated. They sobered down, but broke out into guffaws again. "Eliza's the limit," they assured each other, "for his money—good."

A slender débutante, whose baby face was rosy with champagne, plucked her male companion by the sleeve.

"What does it all mean—about the will?" she asked.

"I'll tell you all about it later," he returned, "for the present it means that Sargent's stripped of everything he thought he owned. She's beat him to it, and she's going to clean him out—the clutching hand."

Mrs. Grimwood's eyes sparkled—she seemed elated at the sensation she had created. She even took a sip of champagne out of Fiske Sargent's glass.

"No, Fiske," she went on, "I didn't come here to crow over you—not that. That's the fortunes of war. I want advice."

Sargent, his face burning, rose.

"Can I take Mrs. Grimwood into the music room?" he started. But his step-grandmother thrust him firmly back into his seat. Her grip was muscular—he winced under it.

"Fiske," she went on, "I've sold that batch of tumble-down tenements I owned on Sixty-fifth Street—got eleven hundred thousand for 'em, and some chicken feed. I've got the figures somewhere. This is my money, Fiske, not your grandpa's. You're in a bank, and know the ropes. I want something good and safe—not real estate—not mortgages. I'm too old to have a lot of bother. And I know you'll steer me right. I wouldn't like to lose eleven hundred thousand dollars——" She glanced proudly at the other guests. "Honest to goodness," she said, "I never lost that much in all my life."

Jeffries, a broker, leaned his head on his hand and groaned. "Never lost," he exclaimed half aloud. "Jehoshaphat, think of her having it to lose."

Sargent heard the groan. He waved his hand.

"There's Mr. Jeffries," he said to his step-grandmother, "he knows good securities—he's more experienced than I am. Try him."

"No trouble to show goods, ma'am," exclaimed Jeffries, somewhat flippantly, but at the same time with undoubted respect tinging his tones.

Eliza Grimwood violently shook her head.

"Not a bit of it," she answered, "perfectly willing to buy through Mr. Jeffries—but I won't trust any Wall Street broker. I rely on you, Fiske, for advice."

"Do you want to invest all of it in one line?" queried Sargent.

"Why not?" she returned, "it's only a little over a million dollars."

Jeffries once more leaned his head on his band.

"Only——" he groaned again. "Is that woman really talking?" he whispered to his next-door neighbor, "or has the Ruinart gone to my head. 'Only'—ah me."

"I would suggest," said Sargent, after a moment's meditation, "Tri-State Railroad fours. They're absolutely safe, and just now, for certain reasons, you can get 'em cheap."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Jeffries, "I couldn't pick a better buy myself."

The woman in the green cloak rose.

"Done," she cried. "Mr. Jeffries, give me your office address. I shall be at your office to-morrow at noon, to invest in Tri-State bonds."

"Make it twelve exactly, will you, Mrs. Grimwood," returned Jeffries nonchalantly, as though the purchase of a million dollars worth of bonds for a single customer was quite an every-day affair, "there's a reason. St. John here," he jerked his head in the direction of the man who had admitted Mrs. Grimwood through the French window, "St. John here is going to leave us for a month or so—and at one I'm going to blow him to a little dinner at Del's, downtown."

Mrs. Grimwood stalked back to the French window.

"I'll climb out the way I climbed in," she said, "if I don't your Buttons will think he's seen a ghost. At twelve exact," she repeated, opening the window.

The men rose as she disappeared. Jeffries watched her go—aghast.

"Only a little matter of eleven hundred thousand dollars," he cried; "if she lost it, I suppose she'd stay awake for fifteen minutes or maybe half an hour, worrying——"

"If she lost it," exclaimed Sargent, "or a tenth or a hundredth part of it, she'd follow the man that did the trick to the ends of the earth."

"The clutching hand," exclaimed a guest.

"She's a wonderful woman, nevertheless," added Sargent.

Pretty Mrs. Bellairs laughed.

"I couldn't have furnished a better cabaret than Eliza Grimwood—I'll give my next dinner in her honor. See how's she livened us—sprinkled us with pepper and with spices." She leaned toward Fiske Sargent, and placed a small, warm hand upon his knee. She flashed a covert glance into his eyes.

"I've been feeling pretty doleful, handsome boy," she whispered, "you know the reason why." She shrugged her white shoulders—her breast heaved. "Can't be helped—the die's cast, isn't it?" She turned to Ruth Poinier—she knew that Ruth was watching her. "Well," sighed Mrs. Bellairs, "you got him away from me—I knew you would. Who wants a widow, when he can have a pretty maid like you."

She picked up a small silver knife and tapped her champagne glass to command attention. Fiske Sargent caught her hand.

"No, no," he cried—"not—not to-night. Don't announce——"

His hostess stared at him.

"But, you silly boy," she protested, "then my dinner goes for nothing. I got it up just to tell people that you and Ruthie here——"

"Not to-night," he repeated, firmly, "the situation's changed. I—I've got to talk to Ruth before—before anything's made public. You—I'll explain it later, Mrs. Bellairs——"

"Mrs. Bellairs," cried his hostess, "I like that. To you I am Roxane—always, I hope. And you mean——"

"I mean what I say," he returned firmly.

Mrs. Bellairs smiled mischievously.

"Ruthie Poinier," she exclaimed, "that gives me another chance at Fiske. Look out. I'm a pretty woman myself—when I'm made up—and I'm young, and very, very fascinating. Delays are dangerous."

The girl searched Sargent's face for an explanation—but he vouchsafed none, just then.

"I—I don't want any delays," cried the girl frankly. Unseen, she fingered a metallic object which was tied within a corner of her handkerchief. "And—and—I admit it. I am afraid of you, Roxane."

"What does a woman marry a man for?" queried Roxane, mimicking the tones of Eliza Grimwood's shrill voice, "because she loves him. That's your idea, girlie, and mine, too." She darted another swift glance at Sargent. "I like to look at him," she added, "except for one man, Fiske is the most fascinating chap I've ever met."

"Who's the other?" queried Ruth, hopefully.

Roxane Bellairs smiled archly.

"Telling," she replied, "very likely I can't get him anyway—so I've tried to take Fiske—all I could get. Only, you've cut me out."

"I'm not so sure," returned the girl, quite earnestly, "that I have cut you out. We'll see."

Half an hour later Sargent was explaining to Ruth Poinier behind conservatory palms.

"You didn't understand?" he queried.

"I didn't," she faltered—and she was very pathetically beautiful as she said it, "but I think I do. It's Roxane Bellairs."

"Good Lord," groaned Sargent, "don't add to my troubles by talking like that. She's a flirt——"

"So are you," cried the girl, "and what's more, she likes you——"

"Don't," he pleaded, "you'll see it in an instant—everythings changed—the Court of Appeals has knocked me endways—and I got their opinion just before I dressed for dinner—it changes everything——"

"How?"

"I was so sure—before," he went on. "We'd won out all along the line. I never thought. You know what my counsel told me—'Not a chance in a thousand that you'll lose.' No, but there was a chance in ten thousand—lightning struck. Yesterday, Ruth, I was worth big money—so I thought. To-day I'm an underling in a New York bank, that's all. And with a salary that—oh, what's the use? Don't you see, I had to keep her from telling people. Lucky we've kept the thing a secret for the last week. They guess, but they don't know—they may never know. You—you can give me back my ring."

"But," she faltered, "we—we're engaged. And oh," she cried, pressing her young lithe body against him and clasping him about the neck, "I—I love you, love you, dear."

"I dare not look at you," he answered. "I tell you everything is changed. If you don't realize it now, you'll realize it later when your father and your mother tell you what it means——"

"Look at me once," she cried. He looked—and groaned.

"Fortunes of war," he cried, repeating a Grimwood phrase.

"You are positive," she pleaded, "that it's not Roxane Bellairs. It's nothing but this will case—nothing else——"

"You know that," he returned.

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing."

She held out her left hand. In it was the ring.

"Put it on my ring finger again," she said, "you've done it once—do it again." She rose. "I won't leave it to Roxane—I'll announce our engagement."

He drew her back into her seat and held her there firmly. He slipped the ring into his pocket.

"You'll do nothing," he commanded, "not to-night. We're living here in Hilcrest Manor—not in moving pictures. And we're living in the twentieth century. We'll do nothing until you've heard what your mother and your father have to say. Believe me, they'll have a lot to say at that."

The next morning at 11.45 Kittredge St. John, man of much leisure, strolled into the private office of Jeffries, the Wall Street broker, of Hilcrest Manor and New York. Jeffries' office was in New Street. St. John was a well-set-up individual, with an inscrutable countenance, and a most engaging manner—he was gay and magnetic. Jeffries drew out his watch. St. John held up his hand.

"Oh, don't mention it," he exclaimed, "I haven't come to go to lunch, not at this hour. I've come to see more of our friend in the faded green cloak—Eliza Grimwood. She's a dear."

"What do you know about her?" queried Jeffries. "I've only lived in Hilcrest Manor for a couple of years or so. Of course the newspapers have been exploiting her for fifteen years—but I don't swallow all the papers say. Has she really got the goods—or is she a faker?"

St. John shrugged his shoulders.

"She's a Tartar, anyhow," he answered, "and I'm in love with her—the dear old thing. She's had two husbands, so they tell me—I'd like to be her third."

"How long have you known her?" asked Jeffries.

Again St. John shrugged his shoulders.

"I've lived in Hilcrest Manor for about three years—that's all. You know all that I do—I read the papers, too."

In the outer office there rose suddenly confusing sounds—sounds of an altercation. And then something like a scuffle.

"By George," said Jeffries, "I forgot to put my people wise."

He was interrupted. The private door of his office burst open and a scarecrow apparition entered, a small boy tugging at her green cloak.

"He won't believe that I'm Eliza Grimwood," grinned that personage, panting with exertion, "you'd better tell him——"

"You go to the cashier and draw your pay," roared Jeffries to the boy. But Mrs. Grimwood caught the boy by the arm.

"Not a bit of it," she said to Jeffries, "you let your stenographer write it up for the Wall Street papers—it'll be a good ad for me—and it won't do you any harm. The boy's all right—if I'd been the beggar that he thought I was, you'd have raised his salary. Go along, sonny. You're one of the very few young men who've ever tried to tear Eliza Grimwood's clothes off her back."

Kittredge St. John placed a chair for the lady.

"Ta-ta," he said, "I'll go out and buy some neckties and come back at one."

"You stay here, young man," said Eliza Grimwood, "I've got nothing to conceal, and I like your line of talk. It was you who let me in at Mrs. Bellairs' last night. You like me, I'm sure. You admire genius, I'll bet a hat."

St. John, grateful, sank into a chair. Before doing so, he bowed low.

"I kiss your hand, dear lady," he murmured.

She eyed him wonderingly.

"You only say it," she exclaimed, in disappointment, as she extended a lean but muscular set of talons, "why don't you do it, eh?"

"Ah," cried St. John, performing the sacred rite, "you are too good."

The dear lady rubbed off the kiss that he had impressed—it was a real one, for St. John was nothing if not game.

"Now, to business," she remarked, "give me a pen."

In another moment she passed a check to Jeffries. It was a check to his order for $1,146,573.

"According to last night's quotations in Tri-State bonds," she said, "that'll come out even. Dictate a written order to buy 'em—keep carbon copies—and I'll sign it. When can I have 'em?"

"Just one minute," exclaimed Jeffries, leaving his desk and starting toward the door. He took the check with him.

"No, no," cried his visitor, "you don't have to use a private phone. You can call up here—you must know somebody in my bank."

Jeffries, startled, returned to his desk. She had divined his purpose instantly.

"I know Tom Jennings, the cashier."

"A crackerjack, Tom Jennings," she assented, "call up Tom."

Jeffries got the cashier on the wire.

"Hello, Tom," he said, "this is Jeffries—Mrs. Eliza Grimwood's in my office——"

"Give me the wire, young man," interposed Mrs. Grimwood. "I'll save you considerable embarrassment. Hello, Tom Jennings," she went on briskly to the man at the other end, "this is Grimwood—E. Grimwood. Yes, he's doing businesss with me. And he don't know anything about me. Oh, yes, he reads the papers, I suppose—wait till I ask him." She asked him. "Yes, he's a constant reader and an old subscriber—maybe he's a pro bono publico. But he wants to know now—right now—about a little check of mine." She stopped and turned to Jeffries. That gentleman was flushing quite profusely. "Tom says for you to take the wire, young man."

Jeffries took the wire again.

"How much is that check?" queried the cashier. Jeffries told him. The cashier sighed—Jeffries could hear him through the phone.

"Listen, Jeff.," said the cashier. "I wish I had that woman's check for—well—a hundred times that sum. That's all. Send it in and get it certified—it won't cover the surface of what she's got."

Jeffries hung up the receiver and turned back to E. Grimwood.

"What does he say?" she demanded.

Jeffries smiled.

"Says he thinks maybe it's most probably good—wanted to know why I couldn't take a chance on a little thing like that."

"When can I have these bonds?" queried his customer.

"It'll take some days," returned Jeffries, handing her a receipt for the check, and getting her signature upon a written order. "I should say Friday or Saturday at the latest. I'll let you know the minnute that I've got 'em all. Good day."

Shortly afterward at dinner St. John broached the subject of Fiske Sargent.

"Came down with him on the train this morning," remarked Jeffries, "and I'll bet he didn't get a wink of sleep all night. This thing's hit him hard—he didn't mention it this morning, but he was as savage as the devil. I suppose this Grimwood woman is within her rights, but, good Lord, what's half a million to her?"

"It's half a million," returned St. John calmly, "and the twentieth part of ten million—and a couple of hundred of 'em will make a hundred million. Every nickel helps to make a muckle. That's the way she got hers, don't you fret."

"It's put him on the blink with the Poinier family," said St. John. He sighed. "If I ever get to be a marrying man, I'd like to have that bewildering little Poinier for mine."

"What about the white arms of Roxane Bellairs?" queried Jeffries.

"Ah," exclaimed St. John, "you've said something. But she won't look at me—nor maybe you. She'll pick her man some day—she don't want money—she wants the man she wants—and it isn't you or me."

"It's just possible that she's picked her man already," smiled Jeffries, darting a meaning glance at St. John.

"Ah," sighed St. John airily, "and that would leave the little dazzling Poinier girl free—doubly free——"

"How long a trip are you going to take, St. John?" queried Jeffries, quite abruptly.

"I'll start to-day—I'll be gone a month at least," returned St. John. That afternoon he started on business of his own—or possibly for pleasure; no one knew—for Chicago and the West.

At half-past one on the succeeding Saturday, Jeffries stopped his car in front of the tumbledown house in Hilcrest Manor, in which resided Mrs. Grimwood.

"Disgrace to the place," he muttered, glancing at the unkempt lawn, and the weather-beaten building. He pressed an electric button which was out of order. He knew by the length of time he had to wait. He knocked and his knock obtained immediate response. Mrs. Eliza Grimwood opened to him. At her command he entered an old-fashioned sitting-room—boasting of a frayed horsehair sofa, rush-bottomed chairs that were dangerous to sit upon, a cracked pier glass, and an old, unstained mahogany table, seared and marked by ill usage. Jeffries produced a brown paper package.

"I've brought these bonds to you under protest," he exclaimed. "I would have kept them till next week except for your telephone. You'd better look at them, and count them while I'm here. I've got to take your receipt."

She opened the package and counted the bonds, after inspecting one or two. She signed the receipt. Jeffries rose.

"Mrs. Grimwood," he said, anxiously, "you know as well as I that these bonds are unregistered bonds, each negotiable and payable to bearer. If they're lost or stolen—good-by."

"I understand," she returned, "I'll keep 'em safe. I was going away Sunday afternoon for a couple of days and I wanted to get this transaction closed, in case I got in an accident or anything."

"You are quite sude they are safe in your custody?" he persisted.

Mrs. Eliza Grimwood thrust her hand into a little pocket in her skirt. She drew forth a black object something less than a foot long, which bulged out toward the end. It

was a blackjack—one of particularly vicious appearance. She lifted it in the air, and brought it, swishing, smashing, down upon the scarred mahogany centre table, denting its already dented surface.

"Young man," she said, "nobody's ever tried to hold me up yet—and woe betide the man who tries it."

"I'm thinking of the robberies—we've had a lot here in Hilcrest Manor. Your house is not as capable of resisting assault as you are yourself, and——"

She shook her head. "You're right," she said, "I didn't think of that. But I'll manage—I'll manage—it's only for a day or so at best."

Half an hour later she crossed her ill-kept lawn, stepped nimbly over a low hedge, and crossed a well-kept lawn. She entered an imposing looking house—it was Sargent's. She burst into his spacious library. There were two persons there—one was Fiske Sargent himself, and the other was Roxane Bellairs. Sargent was at his desk, and Roxane was seated across the way from him, her gloved hands and her rounded forearms resting upon her side of the desk.

Mrs. Grimwood started back.

"I didn't see you come in," she said to Roxane; "usually I can see everything that comes or goes here. I didn't know Fiske had a lady caller. Maybe I intrude."

Mrs. Bellairs smiled.

"And similarly," she returned, "from Fiske's study here one can see all that goes on at your homestead, Mrs. Grimwood—one can see that you have had a gentleman caller—the charming Mr. Jeffries."

"That was business," said Mrs. Grimwood, tartly.

"And this," purred Mrs. Bellairs, "is also business. Fiske was going over my accounts with me, and advising me about my little investments, too. But——"

Roxane rose and started to leave.

"Now, don't go," pleaded Mrs. Grimwood. "I always say I've got no secrets—I don't live a double life—the newspapers can vouch for that." She produced the brown bundle and laid it on the desk.

"Fiske," she laughed, "Jeffries thought I couldn't take care of myself. Do you know what I did—this." She drew forth the supple shot-laden blackjack and brought it crashing down upon Sargent's desk. "He nearly jumped a mile—this Jeffries did," she added to Roxane.

"If that desk had been a man's head now——" began Roxane.

"But," added Sargent's energetic, though elderly visitor, "he reminded me of the robberies we've had—and I'm going away to-morrow for a day or so anyway—and——" She jerked her head toward the big old-fashioned safe in the corner of the room. "You can keep 'em in that big old private box of Grandpa Grimwood's, Fiske," she said, "they'll be safe there till I can take 'em to New York. Count 'em, Fiske—an' give me a receipt."

Sargent, in the presence of the old lady and of young Mrs. Bellairs, inspected the bundle of bonds, opened the big safe, and stowed them away. Mrs. Grimwood stuffed her blackjack and her receipt into her pocket.

"Mrs. Grimwood," said Sargent, rising, "at any time you name I shall be glad to turn over to you this home, all it contains, and everything else—the bonds and mortgages—that my grandfather's last will left to me. I'm ready to vacate at any time."

"No hurry," returned Mrs. Grimwood, "but I'm surprised you've got it all—I figured, once you had that will probated in the lower court, and thought you were safe, you might have used up some of the funds—though I didn't insist upon your being under bond. I thought you might've plunged a bit."

Sargent flushed.

"I don't like to talk about it," he exclaimed. "It's a painful subject. But I—I'm ready any time."

Roxane held out her hand to Sargent.

"Thanks for your assistance, Fiske," she said. She held his hand in hers for a moment, and glanced longingly into his eyes—and there was some new and added impulse in her fervent manner, of which Sargent took quick note. He bowed to Mrs. Grimwood. That lady stalked from the room beside the charming Mrs. Bellairs.

"If I were urged," remarked Roxane, "I might come in and have a chat with you, my dear Mrs. Grimwood."

"Good," said that grim lady. "Hop over the hedge here and come in by the back way. I never use the front door myself."

Back in his study young Sargent sat staring at the picture of Ruth Poinier that rested on his desk. As though in answer to his thought, the telephone bell tinkled.

"Oh, Gurney," he called to his man as he picked up the receiver, "draw down these shades—the sun——"

Gurney drew down the shades. And Ruth's voice came vibrating over the wire.

"I just called you up," said Ruth, "to tell you that Amy Sinclair was robbed of all her jewels last night. It's the fourth robbery in three days. You'd better keep your house locked up."

"I have nothing to lose," sighed Sargent, "and—is that all you have to say?"

"I—should—say—not," replied the girl.

"Well, you'd better not say any more," warned Sargent, "or you'll have me crazy. I'm just settling my affairs, and you know what that means. No, I won't let you talk. This is a matter between you and me—all this—everything. And I can't see daylight. No, my dear girl, I won't listen to another word."

"Just listen to these kisses, boy," she cried. Sargent, with a suppressed groan, hung up the receiver and slumped back into his seat. For half an hour he sat there, thinking—thinking hard. Fifteen minutes later he donned his hat and overcoat and picked up a dress-suit case from the floor.

"Back by nine o'clock, Gurney," he told his man. "Don't save any supper for me—I'll get it in New York."

He caught the 3.25 train. Two of his neighbors saw him board the train—boarded the same train in fact. At four o'clock the train drew into the Grand Central Station. His two neighbors still watched him. They said afterwards that he acted strangely, like a man who felt that he might possibly be shadowed. On Forty-second street they lost him—whether he took the subway or a taxicab, or what became of him, they did not know.

He was back in Hilcrest Manor at nine o'clock, as promised. He still carried the dress-suit case.

"You can go to bed, Gurney," he remarked. "I—I've got work here—hours of it—to do."

He opened his safe, drew out a sheaf of loose papers and plunged into them and their mathematical problems, oblivious to all else. Hours passed. Hilcrest Manor sank into its accustomed slumber. The moon shone upon a silent village.

It was just after one o'clock that a slender figure crept from the shadows at the rear of Mrs. Grimwood's house—a figure clad in a bonnet and an old cloak that looked faded even in the moonlight. This figure darted from bush to bush, from shadow to shadow, stepped nimbly across a hedge and then crept stealthily toward a downstairs window of Fiske Sargent's home. And then the moon darted suddenly behind a cloud.

Next morning Fiske Sargent was discovered, by the side

of his study desk, lying senseless on the floor. Examination developed the fact that one of two things had happened in all probability—either he had fallen in a sudden faint and his head had crashed against the edge of the desk, or he had received a stunning blow upon his head from some blunt instrument.

Mrs. Grimwood's bonds—negotiable—payable to bearer—were missing. The contents of the safe were scattered all about the room.

It was not until Tuesday morning that it became known that Fiske Sargent would survive, and be as well as ever—save for one thing. His memory was gone.

Pending the interval, the physicians and the chief of police of Hilcrest Manor had forbidden all access to the injured man. Mrs. Eliza Grimwood, desperate even to the point of profanity, stormed in and out of the house. Ruth Poinier, regardless of appearances, called at the house half a dozen times a day, crying her pretty eyes out with anxiety. Mrs. Bellairs left flowers and a bottle of old wine on Sunday.

"And my love, Gurney," she added. "Tell him that."

Gurney opened wide his eyes, but tucked the message into the back of his head for future delivery.

On Tuesday morning the chief of police, who, by direction of Mrs. Grimwood, had remained in charge, noted that the letter carrier had delivered a single letter addressed to Sargent. Without hesitation, the chief took it out of Gurney's hand and opened it. As he read it his eyes opened wide. This is what it said:

MARCHBANK, MOORE & CO.,
BROKERS,
15 WALL STREET, NEW YORK CITY.
Telephone Connection.
Members of the New York Stock Exchange.

MR. FISKE SARGENT.

Dear Sir:

Answering your undated inquiry, we desire to say that we shall be glad to purchase Tri-State bonds from you, to any amount—the more the merrier. The market in Tri-State is unusually active just now, and we can get you a good price. Very truly,

MARCHBANK, MOORE & CO.
Per Lantz.

The chief handed it to Mrs. Grimwood.

"The—the scoundrel," she exclaimed. The chief already had confided to her the circumstances surrounding Sargent's surreptitious trip to New York on the Saturday afternoon before, and his disappearance there for the time being. Sargent's family doctor stepped into the room. He nodded to the chief of police.

"You can talk to him now, Chief Blaney," he remarked, "and he can see his friends——"

He was interrupted by the advent of Roxane Bellairs. Roxane welcomed the doctor's announcement in charming confusion. She stripped her glove from her left hand.

"Doctor McIlvaine," she cried, "can he—does he remember?"

The doctor shook his head.

"He will remember nothing—nothing that happened at the time of the injury, nor before it. As to the past, his memory is a blank, and will be for some time. Otherwise, Mrs. Bellairs, he is normal."

Mrs. Bellairs, still prettily confused, twirled a ring upon her finger.

"How—how long will this condition last?" she queried.

"Weeks anyway—months possibly—maybe forever."

"An operation," suggested the chief of police.

"Might be fatal," responded the surgeon. "We hope to absorb this clot—we expect to do so. It would be unwise to endanger the very life of an otherwise perfectly normal young man."

Mrs. Bellairs flashed into the eyes of Mrs. Eliza Grimwood a solitaire ring that encircled the third finger of her left hand.

"I feel that—that my place is at his side," she said, "now that he's out of danger—we—we became engaged last week. I want everybody, in this hour of his trouble, to know it now."

Mrs. Eliza Grimwood stared at her.

"That settles it," she said. "There's a thief for you. There's an unprincipled scalawag. Ten days ago he was engaged, I'll bet a hat to—to another girl. That is, if I know the signs, and I think I do—and now—you——"

An ecstatic smile glorified Roxane's face.

"I have been loyal," she returned proudly. "Perhaps another woman may not be able to say as much. I shall go to him."

She turned and tripped gracefully, eagerly, up the stairs. She glided past the nurse and threw herself on her knees beside the chair in which Sargent was seated. Even as she did so she must have been startled by his appearance—for the surgeon had said the truth. Sargent seemed normal, save for a slight pallor and the bandage encircling his head. He smiled at Roxane and shook his head. He tried to lift her to her feet. But she maintained her attitude. More, she threw her arms about his neck. He shook his head.

"You are a very beautiful young woman," he said, "and I am very lucky to have all this attention. But—I don't remember you—will you tell me, please."

"I am Roxane Bellairs," she said softly, "and—you will recall this."

She twisted the solitaire from her finger and passed it to him. He looked at the inscription on the inside—the engraved letters, "F. S. to R. B.," and the date.

"So recent," he murmured. "It—it wasn't any disappointed suitor who knocked me on the head?"

She laughed and shook her head. She scanned his countenance. "Don't you—don't you remember falling?" she queried.

"Did I fall?" he asked.

"Or being struck?"

"Was I struck?"

"You remember the will of your Grandfather Grimwood?"

"What will?"

"You remember Mrs. Eliza Grimwood?"

A tall cloaked figure stalked into the room.

"Ah, he'll remember me to his dying day, the scalawag," she said. She crossed the room and peered into his face. Roxane maintained her kneeling attitude—one round arm and her left hand rested across his breast.

Sargent looked worried.

"I hear all you say," he told Mrs. Grimwood, "but I don't know you. I have heard before of men who lost their memory—you can't conceive what a blank it is."

Her clutching hand descended upon his arm—she gripped him as in a vise of steel.

"What did you do with my bonds, you scalawag?" she cried. Sargent glanced helplessly from one woman to the other.

"What does she mean?" he queried. "I can reason, and understand figures—McIlvaine tested me to the limit. What bonds—how many?"

"Over a million dollars' worth, dear," returned Roxane.

Sargent whistled.

"Phew," he cried, "a million dollars' worth of bonds—that's going some. Were they registered? No? What, payable to bearer. And lost." He started to his feet. "Who's on the job?" he cried.

"Chief Blaney," said Roxane.

He shook his head.

"Chief?" he queried. "Chief of what—of what?"

They told him—of the local police of Hilcrest Manor. They told him that Hilcrest Manor was a small village—a suburb.

He shook his head.

"You need big men—the best men in the country," he exclaimed.

"Hardly," smiled Eliza Grimwood grimly, "not when the man who did the trick is under arrest—that man is you."

He started. "Me?" he cried. "Where, then, are the bonds?"

"Ah," said Mrs. Grimwood, "where—you scalawag."

Gurney thrust his head into the room.

"Miss Poinier's down-stairs," he announced. "She's in a bad way."

Roxane started to her feet.

"I'll go to her," she cried.

"Ah," added Eliza Grimwood, "and I'll stay here. I'll worm it out of him."

Roxane found Ruth Poinier weeping and hot and dishevelled in a corner of the davenport downstairs.

"Your face is scratched, my dear," she cried, "and your dress torn."

The girl nodded—her face was still covered by her hands.

"They've kept me locked in since it all came out in the papers," she sobbed, "and I had to climb down the lattice work—and—and——" She raised her eyes. "What—what are you doing here, Roxane?" she cried.

"My place is here," returned Roxane simply. "I have been loyal to Mr.—to Fiske through all his misfortunes. I—I accepted him last Saturday afternoon."

The girl stared at her aghast. Her eyes hardened.

"I don't believe it," she cried. "You—you lie."

For answer Roxane handed her the solitaire.

"Examine it," she said coolly.

When Jeffries called at the house late that afternoon he found a more or less travel stained individual waiting on the porch for admittance.

"Kitt St. John!" he cried.

St. John shook his head.

"Somebody wired me in Chicago," he returned. "I don't know who. I got here as fast as steam could carry me." He had a sheaf of newspapers in his hand.

"This is bad business," he went on, "and I don't believe a word they say about Fiske."

Gurney opened the door.

"I'm not coming in, Gurney," said Jeffries. "I wanted to inquire. How's Fiske?"

Gurney told him. St. John placed his hand upon the doorknob. I am coming in, Gurney," he said. "Leave the door ajar."

Jeffries loitered.

"I don't know, old man," said Jeffries to St. John. "It looks consistent. Either he's made up his mind to get even with the old lady, and corral her bonds—or else he was in bad in the Grimwood estate—and stole 'em to make up the deficit."

"I'll stake my reputation on his innocence," returned St. John warmly.

Once within, he hurried to Sargent. For one instant he hesitated. Sargent was talking to Roxane. Sargent glanced up. St. John swiftly crossed the room and stood before him. His lips quivered as he glanced squarely into Sargent's face—but he smiled.

"Roxane—Mrs. Bellairs," said Sargent, "has told me who you are—one of my best friends. I suppose I ought to call you Kitt."

St. John sat down.

"Don't go, Mrs. Bellairs," he said to that charming young personage. He laid his hand on Sargent's arm.

"Fiske," he said, "I tell you now what you never knew and what most of my friends don't know." He drew forth an identifying card. "Apparently I am a man of leisure—and, in fact, I have an income of my own. Actually I am—as you perceive—one of the inner circle of Secret Service men. You know what you're up against—but I know that they're wrong. I'm sure you were the victim of an attack."

"Whom do you suspect?"

"Everybody," answered St. John, "first, and most of all, I suspect the Grimwood woman. Mark my words, that woman's got a record—and she's a strong arm proposition."

"Oh," cried Roxane, "Mr. St. John doesn't know about the blackjack that she carries."

"What?" cried St. John. They told him what Jeffries had witnessed and what Roxane and Sargent had witnessed later—though the latter had no recollection of it.

"I'll stake my reputation that she did it—possibly to injure you. Her husband, your Grandfather Grimwood, loved you—he couldn't have loved her—who could? There's motive—hatred, the blind jealousy of a cunning woman."

"Anybody else," smiled Sargent.

"Jeffries—but he's out of the question, I should say."

"So they tell me. Jeffries is rich and honest, I'm informed."

St. John smiled.

"That brings us down to Mrs. Bellairs," he said.

Roxane gave a little scream.

"Mr. St. John," she cried.

St. John shook his head gravely. "A million dollars is a million dollars," he returned. "Anybody who knew about those bonds is the subject of suspicion."

"I certainly am," laughed Sargent uneasily. "They tell me I've lost a job that I had in a bank in New York—all on account of this."

"Another evidence of this rich woman's malevolence," added St. John. "She sprang at you with an accusation the instant that the thing happened—and then she shouted it aloud to all the world. She'll pay for this—we'll see."

Doctor McIlvaine called to make his afternoon examination. He politely dismissed St. John and Roxane Bellairs and summoned his nurse. Before the nurse responded Sargent asked the doctor to close and lock the door.

"It's a funny thing to put up to you, doctor," he said in a low tone of voice, "and for cat's sake don't spread it—but I'm puzzled—frankly puzzled. I can't understand how I came to be engaged to Roxane Bellairs."

The doctor raised his eyebrows.

"She's one of the belles of Hilcrest Manor. Most men would give ten years of life to hold her in their arms."

Sargent was puzzled.

"I can't feel it," he returned. "She—she doesn't fit in with me somehow. Tell me, have I been accustomed to—to dissipate? Maybe I proposed to her when I was——"

The surgeon shook his head.

"You're not a drinking man," he said, "but you haven't realized what a big hearted woman she is. Think of it,

man. You—you're almost penniless—and in trouble. And yet she sticks to you, in the face of popular opinion."

"Our engagement has never been announced, she tells me."

The doctor shook his head. "No," he returned. "But that's wise for you both—you don't want any more publicity than you've got."

There was a knock on the door. "One—one moment," cried Sargent. "One question more. Who is this Ruth Poinier that I hear about."

The doctor raised his eyebrows. "You were attentive to her," he answered, "and rumor has it that—that there was an understanding between you. When the will case turned out badly—followed by this other trouble—old Poinier and his wife put their foot down."

"And the girl?"

"They say, so Mrs. Bellairs told me, that she acquiesced quite readily. You've always been popular, Sargent, and you've had many feminine admirers, that's a fact."

"Ruth Poinier," mused Sargent, struggling with himself. "I wish—I wish I could remember Ruth Poinier."

The doctor unlocked the door and the nurse entered. As the same time in the study down stairs Kittredge St. John, apparently idler and man-about-town, looked Roxane Bellairs squarely in the eye.

"What could he have done with those bonds?" he queried.

The woman shook her head.

"Leave it to me—I'll find out," she said.

"I'll go to Mrs. Grimwood and tell her who I am," went on St. John. "If anybody can find her bonds, I'm the man to do it—and I'll tell her so."

"The man to do it," repeated Roxane Bellairs, with a vivid smile. "I should say so, Mr. Kitt St. John."

"Now, look a-here, ma'am," said the chief of police three weeks later to Mrs. Eliza Grimwood, "I can lock up this here Sargent any time you say. I've got him under surveillance. He can't get away. But it's your house and they was your bonds—it's up to you."

"I—I've consulted with one of the best men in the country," she explained, "and I think things had better rest. The time will come—this man is getting better all the time—the time will come when he will reveal, consciously or unconsciously, what he did with my bonds. When he does that we can lock him up, but not before."

"Who is this best man in the country?" queried the chief of police, sniffing. "It might be Flanagan of the New York County staff—he's the best we've got."

"No, no," cried Mrs. Grimwood. "I can't tell you who he is—but I feel that he'll find my bonds."

"If we don't find 'em in a week I'll send for Flanagan," said the chief. "Just now we'll leave everything in statu quo, as they say in the books. But this man can't get away."

Sargent didn't get away.

He did not, however, remain always indoors. He motored in Roxane's car at Roxane's side, quite oblivious to the excitement that his each appearance caused in Hilcrest Manor, and oblivious to the constant surveillance of following motorcycles.

Meantime, however, something happened to worry Roxane and to worry Doctor McIlvaine. Sargent found a picture of Ruth Poinier downstairs in his desk. He said nothing about it at first, but both the doctor and Roxane caught him surreptitiously gazing at it from time to time.

"I want to see this girl," he said, "I want to talk to her."

Roxane protested—the doctor shrugged his shoulders. But Sargent's pulse was high—his face feverish—he tossed all night.

The doctor had a talk with Roxane.

"He's in a critical condition," said McIlvaine, "I can't tell what may happen. Everything's been working on his mind. His heart beats like a trip-hammer—part of it's due to the medicine I'm giving him—but only a small part of it. He's worried now only about this girl——"

"She deserted him basely," cried Roxane indignantly.

"He's got to see her," said the doctor, "you fix it—if you can't, I must, that's all."

Roxane saw Kittredge St. John. She reported to him. "I've got to make him believe that—that she's not for him—never was for him," she explained to St. John, "could—could you make love to her—at the moment when he first sees her. I'll arrange the rest."

"Trust me," said St. John, "to make love to any pretty girl."

Three days later Roxane had a party. It was a small party—there were many invited guests, but few who came.

Mrs. Bellairs had indeed sacrificed her social standing in the community by clinging to Sargent. Ruth Poinier—who was supposed by her fond parents to be shopping in New York—was there. Roxane had told her that Sargent was expected. Ruth, her breath coming quick and fast, arrived ahead of time.

St. John entered the arena of events an instant later—he left his long racers throbbing at the curb. He entered forthwith upon a glorious flirtation with Ruth Poinier—and Ruth was young, and susceptible, and a bit of a flirt herself. She was very pretty—and there was an odd pathos in her expression—deep trouble in her eyes, that made St. John's task unusually pleasing. St. John was charming in the rôle of a consoler—Ruth found him so—she yielded unconsciously to the spell of his magnetism.

He heard a soft whistle—and he had waited for it. Bending over the girl, he took one of her hands within his own. She let it lie there.

Suddenly Sargent stood before them. His color was still high—his face was twitching. For one moment only he was silent.

Then his soul leaped into his voice.

"Ruth—Ruth," he cried, holding out his arms.

She darted toward him, but she stopped. Sargent had turned from her. He was facing St. John.

"Come—everybody—everybody," he cried. He extended a shaking forefinger toward the frame of St. John.

"The face—the green cloak—the blackjack—the upraised hand—the man—the man was St. John," he cried.

St. John stared as though shot. He hesitated not an instant. He caught Roxane Bellairs by the arm.

"Come," he cried, "my machine is at the door."

Side by side they darted out. As he leaped into it, tossing the woman in ahead of him—as he shifted the self-starter, as he threw in the clutch—another machine darted up behind. A man leaped from the rear machine and sprinted on ahead.

St. John's machine leaped into the air—was off.

St. John gave one look behind—he laughed.

"Flanagan of New York—my compliments—catch us if you can."

Flanagan fell back in disgust.

"I've never caught 'em yet—nobody's caught 'em—and maybe never will."

"Who are they?" queried the chief of police.

"You can call 'em anything you like," said Flanagan, "I call 'em Mister X and Missus Y—they're unknown quantities to me."

Twenty minutes later, stretched on his couch at home, Sargent was making explanations—so volubly that he was hardly intelligible. Memories of all kinds had rushed upon him at once.

"I thought you'd respond to my treatment," said the surgeon.

"It was Ruth—Ruth," cried Sargent, holding firmly to that young person's hand.

"You see, lieutenant," he went on to Flanagan, "of course I thought it was Mrs. Grimwood. I heard the window being forced—but before I could investigate, she came stalking into the room—her face covered with that cap of her green cloak. I rememmber the blackjack—I remember jerking away the covering from her face—it was St. John." He stopped. "How could it be?" he exclaimed suddenly, "he was in Chicago, so they tell me."

Flanagan smiled.

"That's Mister X to a T," said Flanagan, "his trick. He went as far as Harrisburg, and then come back—rest assured he hasn't been five miles out of this burg at any time during any twenty-four hours—that's Mister X, I tell you. The minute that he knew this woman was going to buy bonds he stuck around—why, the two of 'em, X and Y both, has been stickin' around here for three years—just to get next to some of this old lady's swag. Sure—old residents they were—money, everything. That's them."

"But," protested Sargent, "why did she make love to me—and buy a ring, and——"

Flanagan grinned.

"That's the slickest thing that they pulled off in the whole campaign," he said, "that was the limit of ingenuity, my boy."

"Why?" persisted Sargent.

"Because," went on Flanagan, "Mister X didn't get the bonds that night—that's the point, you see."

"Of course he didn't," returned Sargent.

"Where are the bonds?" demanded Eliza Grimwood, grimly.

"Haven't I told you?" queried Sargent, "I got in a panic that afternoon—I was shaken up about this will thing anyway. Ruth called me up to tell me about Amy Sinclair's robbery——"

"Another X and Y trick, I'll wager," interposed Flanagan.

"And so," went on Sargent, "I made up my mind I'd tuck away these bonds for fair. We've got no bank in Hilcrest Manor. I took 'em to New York. Even then I was nervous—I was afraid somebody'd get me—I seemed to have sensed this thing. I didn't take 'em to my bank, nor to your bank, Mrs. Grimwood. The first safe deposit vaults I spied on Forty-second Street—I dodged in there. They were open. I hired a box, stuck in the bonds, took supper in New York, and came back."

"Why didn't you consult me first?" queried Mrs. Grimwood, "that's a funny way to do."

"Nothing funny about it—I'd have told you Sunday morning. You told me you couldn't get to New York before Tuesday anyhow—and maybe later in the week. I did the right thing, and the safe thing, and did it in a kind of fright—thank God for that—and then forgot until——"

"Until my treatment brought you back," began the doctor.

"Ruth and your treatment," conceded Sargent, "and that brings me back, lieutenant, to my point—why did Mrs. Bellairs claim I was engaged to her? I might," he shivered, "I might have married her."

Flanagan shook his head.

"You might have married her—and from the glimpse I caught of her to-day most any man might've been glad of the chance—but she wouldn't ever have married you—not she—don't think it. This Mister X and Madame Y are pals—lovers—they pull together. She never marries men—she only tricks 'em. That's her game."

"Then why?" persisted Sargent.

"Ah," returned Flanagan, "they didn't get the bonds, did they, now? No—and they knew you had 'em somewhere—and they suspected you'd secreted 'em somewhere in this house. And they had to watch you close—watch you for two things. First, would your memory come back—that was the danger. If it came back, it was good night with Mister X. And Madame Y—she had to be on the job to see to that—to give the warning. But, danger's nothing to them two—nothing at all, if I size 'em up right. They were in danger every minute of the three years they were building up a solid social reputation in this town. Danger wasn't a marker to the stake—over a million dollars worth of bonds that'd fetch a million in the market. They'd waited three years to get next to Mrs. Grimwood—three years—and they wasn't going to lose them bonds. O. K. Some time, consciously or unconsciously, Mr. Sargent, you'd show 'em, somehow, where you'd hid those bonds. How could they watch you better than they did—with the woman hanging 'round your neck, day in, day out—ah, clever, clever."

Mrs. Grimwood took out of her pocket a typewritten letter. It was the incriminating letter to Marchbank, Moore & Co.—it referred to the possible sale of Tri-State bonds.

"Explain that, if you can," she sniffed, "if you can explain that I'll believe your whole story, lock, stock, and barrel."

Sargent smiled.

"You asked my advice about investing eleven hundred thousand dollars," he explained, "and I recommended Tri-State. Grandpa Grimwood had given me a few thousand dollars in his lifetime—I had invested in Tri-State bonds. That's why I recommended them. And when you beat me—unexpected as it was to me—in the Grimwood will case, Mrs. Grimwood, I found that I was shy a few thousand that I'd used—I had to sell my bonds to square it up with you. I wrote them about the market—and they answered, as you see."

Mrs. Eliza Grimwood held out her hand.

"Fiske Sargent," she cried, "I'm a mean, old, vindictive pig, I am. And I've fought you all the way through the courts, just because your grandpa liked you better'n he did me. And I've dragged your reputation in the mud. And I'm going to pay you back—you and this young red-lipped girl of yours. Gentlemen, you're my witnesses—I'm going to give Fiske Sargent all his grandpa's estate—lock, stock and barrel. And something more—you can keep that safe deposit box of yours for permanent use—and you can keep what's in it, too, Fiske. The Tri-State bonds are yours."

Flanagan shook the old lady warmly by the hand.

"There spoke Eliza Grimwood," he exclaimed, "the real Eliza Grimwood. But—ma'am," he protested, "this might have been cleared up a good while ago—easy, too—by hiring a crackerjack New York detective; as it was you jumped to conclusions, and thought you had your man."

Eliza Grimwood sniggered. "I did better than hiring a crackerjack New York detective," she responded, "I hired a Secret Service man in the employ of Washington."

"Who was he?" demanded Flanagan.

"His name," replied Eliza Grimwood, "was—St. John."

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This story was written by the expert criminal hunter

POLICE SERGEANT MALLORY

THE GOLDEN SPIKE

By JAMES TITUS

PART ONE.

THE trouble was that I allowed myself to become too much attached to Henry Pownal from the start.

Had I maintained my usual control of my feelings, the affair of the Golden Spike would not, in all probability, have disturbed me any more than an ordinary case, except, indeed, as to what grew out of it at the end.

There are times and situations which every man can call to memory when he had been moved to talk freely with utter strangers concerning his own private affairs, only to be filled afterward with regret and wonder that he could have been such a consummate fool as to be guilty of anything of the sort.

That was precisely the way my acquaintance with Henry Pownal began.

I had been completely worn out by the arduous duties of my profession—that of a police detective—and had been summarily ordered by my doctor to drop all business and seek the seashore or the mountains for a little rest.

"If you remain in New York a week longer and disturb your mind with another case I shall not be answerable for your life."

That was what my doctor said to me.

"Then I'm off for the coast of Maine this very day."

That was what I said to my doctor.

I not only said it, but I meant it, and before the sun went down on that July day I was sailing up the Sound, seated on the crowded deck of the Fall River boat.

That was the occasion of my first meeting with Henry Pownal.

I was seated on the upper deck smoking a cigar long after the music in the cabin had ceased and most of the passengers had retired to rest, when a young and handsomely dressed gentleman stepped to my side and in the politest possible manner requested the favor of a light.

Of course I complied, and there being a vacant stool alongside of my own, I mechanically pushed it toward him, and he sat down.

Whether it was the influence of the soft summer starlight, the monotonous clanking of the engine, or the magnetic presence of the man himself, I never knew; but before an hour had passed I found myself talking to Henry Pownal as confidentially as if I had known him all my life.

Of course we had exchanged cards, and my cheap, printed pasteboard, with plain "James Titus" upon it, was completely put to the blush by the delicate engraving of his more aristocratic name.

Inquiring as to his business, I found that he was a practicing attorney in New York City not two years from college.

He had no need to inquire my business—I had told him that I was a detective without being asked.

We talked of everything; politics, science, out-of-door sports, and finally criminals and crime.

"What do you think, Mr. Titus," he asked, "of the prevailing theory, or perhaps I should rather say belief, that murder will out, that the most heinous of all crimes can never be successfully concealed?"

I told him frankly that I believed nothing of the sort; and as he seemed inclined to take the opposite side of the question, cited several cases that the perpetrators of which had gone down to the grave unknown.

For more than an hour we continued to discuss this theme, for once started there was no stopping him, and I was vain enough to believe that the peculiar fascination he displayed for the subject was the direct outcome of the wisdom of my words.

"There is the Muirhead case!" I said at length. "It is one in point—you have heard of it, of course?"

I can recall now that he gave a slight start, although at the time I must confess I failed to observe it.

"You refer to the disappearance of William Muirhead, the returned Californian, some two months since," he replied quietly.

I could not see his face—that was turned from me, and gazing at the smooth expanse of Long Island Sound, which glittered like a fairy lake in the moonlight as the great steamer sped along.

"That's the case," I answered. "William Muirhead returned from California to New York. On a certain day, now more than two months since, he was seen to enter one of the largest office buildings in Nassau street. On his person, as is positively known, was $50,000 in bills. From the moment of his entering that building all trace of him is lost. From that day to this he has never been seen nor heard of again."

"And, according to your theory, nothing ever will be heard of him," he remarked, in the same low tone.

"I don't say that," I replied. "Nevertheless, I think that such is highly probable. The best detectives in New York City have exercised their skill on that case, but in vain."

My answer seemed to be the signal for ending the conversation, for as I thus spoke Henry Pownal abruptly bade me good-night and left the deck.

I followed his example, and we saw no more of each other until the next morning, when we met in the smoking-car of the Old Colony train.

Then, to my surprise and pleasure, I learned that Henry Pownal was bound on the same errand as myself—a month's rusticating in the woods of Maine.

From that moment until the middle of August we were seldom apart.

By that time—which saw us back in New York—we had become the firmest of friends.

During this period I thought I had learned all about his affairs, and he knew everything that I had to tell.

Among other things I learned that the life of Henry Pownal, since the death of his father, which had occurred at the time of his leaving college two years before, had until recently been one of continued struggle for bread.

I have stated that he was a lawyer, but I neglected to state that during the two years he had been in practice the number of his clients could have been told off on the fingers of one hand.

He had been engaged during that time to a rich and exceedingly beautiful young lady—a Miss Rose McCollum, the daughter of Senator McCollum, whose elegant country

seat at Brinwood-on-the-Hudson is known to every one without my calling particular attention to it here.

Their marriage had been delayed by the objections of the young lady's father, who, somewhat absurdly, as it seemed to me, demanded that Henry Pownal should be able to give evidence of the possession of at least ten thousand dollars before the nuptials could take place.

In the present state of his practice he might have waited years for this had not a relative in England—so he informed me—opportunely taken her departure from this vale of tears some two months before he met me, leaving him several times that sum.

Upon receiving this legacy it had been arranged that the marriage should take place in the early fall.

Being somewhat run down in health by the long struggle through which he had passed, the young attorney had determined upon a month's outing in the Maine woods previous to entering upon the responsibilities of married life.

That was the way our meeting came about.

Upon our return to New York, my own condition being but slightly improved, I gladly accepted the invitation of Senator McCollum—obtained through Henry Pownal, of course—to become his guest at Brinwood Lodge, to remain until after the wedding had taken place.

It was a beautiful spot.

The first week of my stay seemed like the beginning of a new existence—a veritable transformation to another life.

Never before had I been thrown in daily association with persons possessed of sufficient means to enable them to live without work.

Such was the case at Brinwood Lodge.

Of all the guests—I should say there were some twenty, if I remember aright—I think it is safe to say that I was the only one accustomed to toil.

Fancy a low, rambling mansion, extending room upon room, ell upon ell over one hundred square feet of ground, flanked on all sides by broad verandas, and literally buried in the center of a grove of spreading white oak trees, and you have Brinwood Lodge as I saw it upon the evening of our first arrival.

"There it is, Jim!" exclaimed Henry Pownal—he already called me by my familiar first name, you see—pointing ahead of us up the broad avenue from the back seat of the little Ford which had been sent to the station to meet us. "If you can't recover your health here you never will. In five minutes I shall have introduced you to the cleverest girl in the world—I won't say the most beautiful, although I am certain you will think so. There she is! Don't you see her? That tall, dark-haired, queenly creature seated by herself at this end of the piazza, removed from those tiresome butterflies of fashion who are pretending to dance on the other side of the steps."

That was the first time I saw Rose McCollum, though not the last, by a great deal.

Five minutes later Henry Pownal, alighting from the flivver, had clasped her in his arms.

It was one continual round of dancing, hunting, fishing, boating and the like during the entire week which followed.

Strange as it all was to me, I think I may say without vanity that I managed to keep my end up pretty well.

I flirted with the young ladies, I played cards and billiards, told stories and smoked with the men.

I was a trim young fellow and ready to adapt myself to any situation. Had it not been for what followed I doubt if one among them would have ever dreamed that they had, in the person of the lively and versatile Mr. Titus, been entertaining a police detective all the while.

Though I enjoyed myself with the merry company, and tried to make myself generally agreeable, my particular enjoyment during that week, which I have always thought of since as the lull before the storm, was to steal away in company with Henry Pownal and hunt in the woods which lay on the opposite side of Brin's Creek, from which the more pretentious name of Brinwood was derived.

Here, accompanied by Miss McCollum's red Gordon setter Joe, we would wander for hours, and not without success, either, for partridges were to be had for the seeking, and not infrequently quail was found.

One afternoon we started out as soon as the lunch table was cleared, intending to continue our hunting excursion until the sun went down, but such was our luck that by four o'clock we were ready to return.

As our game-bags had grown somewhat heavy, we sent them with the guns back to the house by Will Sanders, a country lad who had accompanied us as a sort of half-factotum, half-guide, and sauntered on slowly through the woods, discussing Henry's plans for the future as we walked.

"One week more, and I shall be a married man, Jim," he said. "Do you know I can hardly realize it? It seems to me often that I am wholly undeserving of the happiness in store for me. Wealth, a life of ease and the possession of the woman I love. A few months ago all these things seemed as far removed from me as the summit of the Himalaya mountains."

I could not help but notice that he gave first place to wealth and a life of ease, last to the possession of the girl he loved; but I made no comment upon the selfishness of his remark, for at that moment I was in the act of leaving him to seek the cottage of a widow—a Mrs. O'Brien, wife of the former gardener at the great house—to obtain a pitcher of water, the heat of the day being great and both of us exceedingly dry.

"I'll wait here, Jim," Pownal had said. "I am pretty well tired out, and besides, if I go to the cottage Mrs. O'Brien will have so much to say that we will not get rid of her in a week."

He might as well have gone with me.

Good, garrulous Mrs. O'Brien, upon hearing that the water was for the prospective bridegroom at the great house, insisted upon carrying the pitcher to him herself.

The distance was but a few steps, and I had not been ten minutes away, when, approaching the great oak tree where I had left Henry Pownal, I was horrified at seeing him stretched out upon the grass, motionless, and with a face as white as the face of a corpse.

"Oh, the poor, poor man! He has fainted for the want of a sup of wather!" cried the kind-hearted Irishwoman, setting down the jug and kneeling upon the ground.

Sympathetically she raised his head and grasped his hand, the setter-dog Joe looking on meanwhile.

For fully ten minnutes I worked over the body of Pownal, chafing his hands, dashing water in his face, to say nothing of the whisky I forced between his tightly-set lips.

I did not dare to leave him, even to call for help. At last he revived. To ask him the cause of his weakness was of course not to be thought of then.

"Lean upon me, old man," I said, assisting him to rise.

As he did so my eye caught the flash of the rays of the setting sun reflected back from a small glittering object, which rested upon the grass where he had lain.

"One moment, you have dropped your pencil from your pocket," I said, stooping as I spoke.

That my hand would grasp a pencil case I had not at that moment the least doubt in the world.

Never have I been more mistaken.

Instead of the pencil case I picked up from the grass a tiny spike of yellow gold.

PART TWO.

FILLED with astonishment I gazed upon it, Henry Pownal still leaning heavily on my arm.

His face, pale as it had been, was paler now, and his eyes were held averted as though the object which I had found was the very last thing upon which he desired them to rest.

"You must have dropped this, Mr. Pownal," I said, extending it toward him. "Where did you get it? I don't remember ever having seen such a thing before."

Perhaps the tone of my voice bore indirect evidence to the nature of the thoughts passing through my mind.

Though I had never seen this tiny golden spike before, I had heard of it, and that in connection with the most mysterious of crimes.

I refer to the Muirhead mystery, of course.

When William Muirhead, the returned Californian, entered that Nassau street office building with $50,000 upon his person, from which he was never known to have emerged, he had in his possession, dangling from his watch-chain, just such an object as this.

He had been among those who were present at the final junction of the tracks of the Union and Central Pacific railroad, upon which occasion each person had been presented with a tiny spike of gold in honor of the day.

This fact, which was well known to his friends, had been dwelt upon by the newspapers, and to trace the golden spike had been the principal clue followed by the detectives in their search for the possible murderer of the missing man.

"It ain't mine, Jim," Henry Pownal breathed, in a hoarse voice. "If you have found it you had better keep it. I never saw the thing before."

I said nothing for a moment. My detective's instinct had been roused within me. Golden spikes do not grow in the grass—that it must have fallen from his pocket while he lay there I knew without being told.

"What happened to you?" I said, in constrained tones, as we moved slowly toward Brinwood Lodge.

"Upon my word I am unable to tell you. A sudden faintness seized me. The next thing I knew Mrs. O'Brien and yourself were bending over me—that is all I have to tell."

I said no more, but, with Henry Pownal still resting upon my arm, continued slowly toward Brinwood Lodge.

We had almost reached the house, when, looking up, I perceived Miss McCollum coming toward us down the oak-lined avenue, an elderly gentleman leaning on a cane walking by her side. I think my companion must have discovered the pair at the same instant as myself.

With a low exclamation of pain or terror, I was unable to determine which, he sprang away from me and disappeared among the shadowing trees.

What ailed the man I could not guess. Before I had time to fully realize the situation he was gone. Not wishing to disturb the lady of Brinwood Lodge by the sight of my troubled countenance, I drew back into the shadow of a great oak, intending to remain concealed until they had passed.

But Rose McCollum and her elderly companion did not pass. It seemed as though they had simply strolled out for the sake of privacy, and that the chosen spot was the other side of the great oak behind which I was concealed.

Then judge of my surprise when, peering out from behind the tree, I perceived that the elderly gentleman was none other than old Sam Sleeman, one of the shrewdest detectives on the New York force, a man personally known to me for years.

He was cleverly gotten up, that I must admit; but I had seen the old fox in too many disguises to be deceived by him at this late hour in the day.

What had brought him to Brinwood Lodge in the disguise of a gentleman remained to be seen.

"Beautiful place this, Miss McCollum," I heard him remark from my concealment behind the oak.

"I love it, Mr. Muirhead. I was born here, you see."

Muirhead!

The name seemed to strike my brain like a knell. As I peered around the tree, I now perceived that Sam in his present disguise exactly resembled the picture of the missing Californian with which the illustrated papers of the day had been filled.

"I should think you would be sorry to leave it," I next heard him remark.

"I do feel so at times," the beautiful girl replied. "But then—but then——"

"But then to leave it with a rich and handsome husband is quite a different thing."

"Sir!"

"Pardon an old man's familiarity, miss. You see, I have daughters older than you. Marriage is a blessed thing or a cursed thing, according as the parties are mated. I am a stranger to you, but I feel for you. Let the old man speak a word of warning. If you value your future happiness, stick to Brinwood. If you would avoid a life of utter wretchedness, tear the image of Henry Pownal from your heart!"

He turned his back abruptly upon the lady as he uttered these words, and hurried off through the shadowing trees.

As I did not consider that I had any right to watch the pained, astonished features of Miss McCollum a moment longer, I drew noiselessly away in the twilight.

What could old Sam Sleeman mean? Knowing him as I did, I knew that he had never spoken those warning words without good cause. That the shrewd old detective was possessed of a kind heart had been demonstrated to me over and over again in the past. It was from his heart that he had spoken, now even at the risk of imperiling the object he had in view. How I pitied the girl from whose presence I now summarily fled!

From the first moment my eyes had rested upon her beautiful form I had admired her and had envied Henry Pownal in the possession of one so fair.

And why should I have pitied her at that moment? To the ordinary mind there had been but little to alter my feelings toward Henry Pownal or the lady he loved. But my mind, while ordinary enough, Heaven knows, in most things, was extraordinarily alert in the matter of criminals and crime.

The golden spike, the presence of old Sam Sleeman at Brinwood under the name of Muirhead, they meant something; I could see that at a glance.

Resolved to understand the matter with the least possible amount of delay, I stole back to the mansion again. A few hurried inquiries among the guests informed me that "Mr. Muirhead" was the friend of Senator McCollum, and that he had arrived by the afternoon train.

From that moment, by some intuitive instinct, I seemed to see it all. Senator McCollum, for reasons of his own, had invited the famous detective to Brinwood Lodge, and was a party to his disguise.

What for?

They had reason to believe that the slayer of the returned Californian was present at Brinwood. That was why old Sam had been made up to look like the dead man —why he had assumed his name. Knowing the methods of detectives as I did, I could feel no doubt that in this assumption I was entirely correct.

And who among the twenty guests at Brinwood could this suspected party be?

It was not often that I allowed myself to be drawn into sudden friendships, and I don't relish being deceived. Two things seemed certain.

Henry Pownal had fainted because he had caught a glimpse of old Sam Sleeman in his present disguise. The golden spike which had been on the person of William Muirhead when he so strangely disappeared had been found on the grass where the body of my friend had lain.

Mechanically I walked out upon the veranda.

The merry company of Brinwood Lodge was there, excepting only Miss McCollum and Henry Pownal—they were nowhere to be seen.

I knew well enough where the former could be found, and the latter, I felt satisfied, had sought his room. I walked quietly to the library. On the top of a small safe, used by the senator to keep his private papers secure, I had previously seen a city directory. This I opened, and with sinking heart turned to the letter P.

There it was, just as I had feared to see it.

"Pownal, Henry, lawyer, No. —Nassau street, room 45."

The building into which William Muirhead had entered, but never emerged, and that in which Henry Pownal had his office were one and the same! Strangely enough, I had never known where my friend had his office before.

As I stood there, my eyes fixed upon the page, I found myself wondering whether Henry Pownal had actually had a relative in England who had died leaving him a fortune at so opportune a time, and whether $50,000 was or was not the exact amount he had received.

And in that moment I saw that one of them must be sacrificed. I registered a vow then and there that Rose McCollum should not be the one. Sam Sleeman might have his suspicions, but I had the long-sought-for clue.

When I tapped gently at the door of "Mr. Muirhead's" room two hours later, my disengaged hand was fumbling the golden spike, which rested loosely in the pocket of my coat.

The door was opened stealthily—Sam could not have opened it in any other way had he tried—and a gray head was thrust out into the passage.

"Jim Titus! What the deuce——"

"Hush!" I whispered, holding up my hand. "Sleeman, let me in."

In an instant we were alone behind a securely-fastened door.

"What brings you here?" demanded the old man, angrily. "I understood that this case was in my hands."

I explained my presence in the fewest possible words.

"Now, then, what brings you here?" I demanded. "What is this case to which you referred?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you, Jim, since you are not here professionally," he replied, as we seated ourselves on opposite sides of the center-table. I wore my light fall overcoat and carried my hat in my hand, as, unable to rest, I had spent the evening strolling about the grounds.

"Out with it, then," I replied, "for I am dying to know."

"You know the name I bear in this house?"

"Muirhead, is it not?"

"It is. Look at my disguise; whom do I remind you of?"

"Your disguise is perfect. You are the image of William Muirhead, the returned Californian, who disappeared in New York so mysteriously some months ago."

"Very well. I am after his assassin."

"I suspected as much. Do you expect to find him at Brinwood Lodge?"

"I expect nothing. I have reason to believe, however, that the man who took the life of William Muirhead is here."

"And his name?"

"Well, upon my word, Jim, I don't like to tell you, after what you have said," he repeated slowly, rising at the same time and resting one hand upon the back of his chair, gazing downward with an expression of pain.

"Don't spare me, Sam Sleeman," I exclaimed, thrusting my hand into my pocket and extending the golden spike toward him in my open palm. "There is another to be considered—the innnocent girl whom you warned this evening beneath the oaks."

"You heard—you saw!" he exclaimed, raising his eyes and glancing quickly toward me. "My God! Jim Titus! How did you come by that?"

His eyes had rested upon the golden spike, which he now snatched from my open hand.

"I found it on the grass where Henry Pownal fell fainting at the sight of you in your disguise."

"Then you saw?"

"I saw nothing. I have only guessed."

"And you guessed correctly. I did show myself to Henry Pownal, and he keeled over as though a ball had pierced his heart."

"You recognize that golden spike?"

"Of course I do. It fell from his pocket?"

"There can be no doubt of it, I am sorry to say."

"It is the last link in the chain! It is—— Hark! What noise was that?"

It was the sound of the outer door of the mansion closing below.

Noiselessly turning the slats of the blind, Sam Sleeman peered out.

"See! See!" he whispered.

I looked over his shoulder and beheld Henry Pownal striding down the graveled walk, grip-sack in hand.

"He's off by the midnight train and we must follow!" whispered Sam, seizing his hat and coat.

A moment later and we were creeping after the fugitive down the oak-lined avenue in the darkness of the night.

PART THREE.

HENRY POWNAL did take the midnight train for New York. His destination had been the Brinwood station, as old Sam Sleeman had surmised.

When the train rolled out of the station, Sam and I were seated side by side in the extreme end of the last car. We had ascertained that he had purchased a ticket for New York, and, save to make certain that he did not alight at a way station until the train reached the Grand Central depot, there remained nothing for us to do.

It was during the hour that followed that Sam told me all about it. It seemed that when the other detectives abandoned the search for the golden spike and the murderer of William Muirhead, that was just the time this sly old fox began to work. There had been a reward of $10,000 offered by Jonas Muirhead, the rich produce merchant, and brother of the missing man. This Sam fully intended to capture, but it was necessary to capture the [illegible] first.

He went about the business systematically, and in his own peculiar way. His starting point was the disappearance of the $50,000—he wasted no time at all in searching for the golden spike. Some one had benefited by that money. Who was it?

This Sam made it his first duty to learn.

He first ascertained that the returned Californian had been last seen upon the third floor of the Nassau street office building. Then he made a careful list of the occupants of all the offices upon that floor. In every instance save one these offices were occupied by several persons in common. The exception was the office of Henry Pownal—he occupied it alone. The occupants of the other offices were mostly real estate brokers, men in the ordinary walks of life, well known in the business world.

Sam then set himself to work to inquire into the private affairs of all these persons, and was not long in discovering that none of them had experienced any sudden increase of fortune.

Henry Pownal, on the contrary, had.

At about this time Henry Pownal started for the Maine woods. Through the agent of the building the old detective obtained entry to his office, examined his desk and such of his private papers as were accessible. For a long time he was unsuccessful, but was at length rewarded by finding a single letter from William Muirhead addressed to the absent lawyer, written from California more than a year before.

The letter was a business one, and showed that Henry Pownal had been recommended to the writer as a competent person to press a small suit then pending in the New York courts.

From this time the work had proceeded more rapidly. It was discovered that Henry Pownal had not only pressed his suit, but had won it, and that another matter belonging to the Californian had been attended to by him as well. That Pownal had acted as his attorney there could be no question; hence it was to his office that the Californian had been bound when he entered the building seemed reasonable to suppose.

The matter of the English legacy was then looked into. It was claimed by Henry Pownal in his conversations with Senator McCollum that his fortune—£8,000 was the amount he named—had come to him by the will of a Mrs. Rebecca Pownal, his aunt, who resided in Bradford, England.

Correspondence with the authorities of Bradford showed conclusively that the old lady had died without a penny to her name. From the first Senator McCollum had been in the secret, and, as Sam informed me, his mind had been beset with a thousand doubts and fears. He did not wish to cross his daughter in her love, he did not wish to have her marry a suspected man—perhaps murderer—and was, consequently, wholly at a loss as to what course to choose.

Then it was that Sam Sleeman suggested that he appear at Brinwood Lodge, disguised so as to resemble the missing man. How this plan worked has already been told.

"I confess my case was somewhat weak, Jim," the old man said confidentially, "until the moment that you showed me the golden spike. Now I can doubt no longer. Henry Pownal killed William Muirhead for his money; the only difficulty is to obtain evidence which will convict him in the courts."

"Do you intend to arrest him at once?" I asked.

"Not at all. I propose that we shall follow him for the balance of the night at least. I am anxious to see what he will do."

"If he is the assassin, what do you suppose became of the body? It could not have vanished into thin air. To remove a dead body from the top of that office building, and to so dispose of it as to excite no suspicion is, to my mind, an exceedingly difficult thing to do."

"That's just the trouble," he replied somewhat gloomily. "If I knew that all would be clear."

It was one o'clock when he reached the Grand Central Depot. We saw Henry Pownal alight and board a downtown train on the elevated road. When he alighted at the Franklin Square station we were still close at his heels.

The night was exceedingly dark and gloomy, and, to make things more dismal, a light rain had begun to fall. High above the gloomy arches of the Brooklyn Bridge the electric lights shone forth, and by their iridescent glare we saw our man walk rapidly down Dover street toward the East River front. Silently we crept after him at the distance of a block away.

"Where can he be going?" I whispered. "Does he intend to make his escape on some outward bound ship?"

"Hush!" answered Sam in the same low voice. "Something tells me that we are nearing the end."

The words had scarcely left his lips when the man ahead of us turned into Front street, and paused before the door of an old tumble-down warehouse, which bore the sign, "To Let."

Looking cautiously up and down the street to see if his movements were observed, he took a key from his pocket, opened the door and let himself in. From our position in the shadow of the building at the corner Sam Sleeman and I saw it all.

"Watch here," whispered the old detective; "in a moment I will know to whom that building belongs."

He crept across the street with the lightness of a cat. It seemed as though his footsteps made no sound upon the pavement at all. In a moment he stood before the warehouse and was reading the bill.

"The building is to let, with instructions to apply to Henry Pownal, No. —— Nassau street," he whispered as he returned to my side. "Now, Titus, let us be patient and see what the next ten minutes will bring forth."

And we waited.

For the next ten minutes nothing happened.

Not a soul passed us, the street remained deserted, the warehouse front rose silent and grim.

"Silence now! He's coming!" old Sam breathed.

He was right. At that moment the door opened and Henry Pownal emerged. He was pushing a small hand-cart before him, upon which was deposited an old black leather trunk.

Carefully locking the door behind him, he propelled the hand-cart along Front street, turning into Dover and thence to South. That we crept after him need not be said.

At South street he paused, looked up and down, and seeing no one, shot across the street and to an uncovered wharf.

"The time has come," whispered Sam Sleeman to me. "He must go no further without help from us."

We sprang across South street with a bound.

So intent did the man seem to be on his own business that he never even turned his head, although he must have heard us—sometimes I have thought since that his apparent indifference arose from an insane desire to accomplish his purpose and a belief that, if allowed to do so, he might yet be saved. At all events he fairly ran over the planks of the wharf, trundling the hand-cart before him with all possible speed.

Evidently the trunk was heavy, for we could see the hand-cart sway from side to side.

Had we been one moment later the string-piece of the wharf would have been reached, and the black leather trunk with its ghastly secret would have sunk beneath the waves.

A moment!

It has changed the fate of nations!

That moment tore the black crime of Henry Pownal from its hiding place and made it plain to all the world.

With a low cry old Sam Sleeman sprang upon him, pressing him to the dusty planks of the wharf, while I, with equal celerity, wrenched the pole of the little cart from his hands.

Never, if I live to be a hundred years old, shall I forget the look of demoniacal rage that shot toward me from Henry Pownal's eyes.

"You, you!" he cried, pressing his hands before his face. "For God's sake, Jim Titus, don't tell Rose!"

He did not speak again, for the name of the lady, whom, I will do him the justice to say, I believe he loved, had scarcely left his lips when he fell back upon the planks of the wharf in a deeper swoon than he had fallen in the wood.

"Open the trunk, Jim," exclaimed Sam Sleeman, as he rose from the side of the inanimate form.

I obeyed.

With my boot-heel I struck through the frail lid, wrenching it from its fastenings.

The trunk contained a corpse.

* * * * * *

The Muirhead mystery was a mystery no longer.

As plain as plain could make it had that night's work of old Sam Sleeman and myself rendered that much-talked-of crime.

There was no opportunity for further concealment, no motive for denying the crime.

In due time the miserable wretch recovered and was conveyed to the Oak street station.

Sam Sleeman led him, handcuffed, through the deserted streets, while I trundled the hand-cart and its ghastly burden behind. At the station Henry Pownal made a full confession. William Muirhead, as was suspected, had been his client, and he had killed him in his office in Nassau street for the money he had about him.

The body had been removed in the day time in the trunk by an unsuspecting expressman to the empty warehouse in Front street of which he had charge.

He could not bring himself to take further steps toward disposing of it until the appearance of old Sam Sleeman at Brinwood Lodge had shown him the perilous position in which he stood.

The golden spike he had kept about him from a morbid desire, as he told me, to have ever before him a reminder of the crime which he intended to devote his whole life to atone.

His motive was, he claimed, the all-absorbing passion he had felt for Rose McCollum and the knowledge that the possession of a large sum of money would alone enable him to win her hand.

* * * * * *

It was the afternoon of the day on which Henry Pownal was executed.

I was sitting in my room at the —— hotel over an untasted meal, deep in the account of the last moments of my quondam friend, as published in the "extra" which the waiter had just brought up at my request, when a lady was announced.

Clapping my hat on my head to give me a more professional air, I started to my feet to greet Rose McCollum, who at that moment entered the door, clad in the deepest black.

"Mr. Titus," she exclaimed, rushing toward me, "they tried to stop me, but I felt that I must come! Is there no way in which I could see him again? Will they be so cruel as to refuse me permission to breathe one word of comfort to him before he dies?"

In answer I silently pointed to the newspapers which I held in my hand.

"God comfort you, Miss McCollum," I answered sadly. "Henry Pownal is already gone."

She wept long and bitterly. For weeks and months it seemed as though her reason must be dethroned. I did all I could to comfort her, and to point out the narrow escape that she had had.

Time, which cures all things, assuaged her grief at last. How well I assisted time I will leave the reader to judge when I simply state that Rose McCollum is now Rose Titus—my wife.

A long life of happiness and forgetfulness of the past is before us both, I trust, and for it I have to thank the good fortune which threw into my hands the golden spike.

Watch for the startling detective stories to be issued in our next number.

TAKE NOTICE!

The feature stories already published in this magaz ine are worth reading. Here are the latest numbers:

NO.
21 KING COBRA MYSTERY, by George Gilbert
22 THE HAUNTED CORRIDORS, by Wm. H. Osborne
23 NO MAN'S MAN, by Maxwell Smith
24 THE TREVOR PUZZLE, by T. C. Harbaugh
25 THE TRAIL OF ROSES, by Edmund Condon
26 THE HINDOO VANISHING CLUE, by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 WHO WAS GUILTY? by Beulah Poynter
28 THE EVIL EYE, by Chas. F. Oursler
29 THE THIRTEENTH DOOR, by Edith Sessions Tupper
30 THE GAME OF DETECTIVE CAREW, by L. Jerome
31 LAW-MAKER AND LAW-BREAKER, by Beulah Poynter
32 THE COUNTERFEIT HEIRESS, by Inspector John Harrigan
33 TRACKED TO CHINA, by Chief Roger O'Brien
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THE MISSING SAPPHIRES

BY A PHILADELPHIA DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER ONE.

"I AM vexed about my own loss, of course," said pretty Mrs. Vanesse, looking ready to cry with her excitement; "but I am inexpressibly distressed that a guest should be robbed while beneath my roof. And, besides, my dear Countess Lora's sapphires were of almost priceless value."

Mrs. Vanesse was the wife of one of our millionaire merchants, and the mistress of one of our finest uptown palaces.

Don Vanesse had met, loved and married her in some comparatively unknown town of the far Southwest, whither he had gone on a protracted hunting expedition with an adventurous party of Britain's gilded youth.

Metropolitan society had not been particularly gracious to the new and unpretentious acquisition; but she was regarded as a delightful hostess, and she seemed to have no end of acquaintances always eager to be entertained—briefly or otherwise—in a house where warmest hospitality regulated everything.

"The Countess Lora is—is who?" I inquired, with a curiosity warranted by my profession.

"She is the widow of the late Count Carundalle, whom she married while she was finishing her education in Europe. He was immensely wealthy, and he settled everything upon Lora. The sapphires were heirlooms."

"Have you no suspicions—has she none—as to whom might have committed the theft?" I asked.

"Not the slightest," she replied readily. "I gave a reception last evening—a very small and quiet affair too—and we both wore the jewels which are now missing. When we retired my diamonds were safely locked in a casket on my dressing table, and Lora put her sapphires with her watch beneath her pillow. This morning both alike had disappeared!"

"Are your servants of undoubted honesty?" I queried.

"I have always believed them so," she replied earnestly. "They have all, with one exception, been with me since my marriage; the exception is the stylish-looking housemaid who admitted you just now. But her references were of the best; I could not possibly doubt her entire ignorance of the unpleasant affair."

"Well," said I, "you sent for me, and I am here to unravel the mystery if I can. And now, with your permission, I should like to make an inspection of the chambers from which the valuables have disappeared."

"Certainly," she acquiesced amiably, as she arose and opened the door of an apartment adjoining the quiet breakfast room wherein she had afforded me an interview. "My husband will be here directly and he will accompany you; meanwhile you can wait in his study and make yourself cozy with his cigars and morning papers."

I had seated myself in a temptingly luxurious study chair, when I chanced to look toward the door she had left ajar, and as I looked I perceived a magnificent woman entering the breakfast room I had just left.

She might have been twenty-seven or eight years of age, or rather more, perhaps; she was tall, large-limbed, with sculpturesque features and with hair and eyes as black as night; her lips were like carved coral, and her smile was indescribably brilliant and magnetic. The dress she wore was of royal red velvet—a miracle of cut, fit and embellishment—and remarkably suitable to her grand style of attractions.

"Here is the Countess Lora herself," I thought, as, with a stately tread, she advanced and gracefully ensconced herself upon a sofa beside her hostess.

But my half-indifferent gaze changed to a stare of surprise as at the moment the elegant breakfast room was invaded by an astonishing apparition, who, in some equally astonishing way, had gained an unceremonious access to the presence of the wondering ladies.

The apparition was that of a prematurely bowed and wrinkled man, whose aspect and habiliments undeniably suggested those of a vagabond nomad.

With an expression of pitiably-blended bravado and deprecation he shambled over the rich carpet, his battered hat in one hand and in the other a folded paper, which he seemed extending toward the Countess Lora.

Mrs. Vanesse was instantly startled from the prettily timid sort of composure which distinguished her.

"The servants will give you what you want; you cannot be permitted here," said she, speaking hurriedly as she nervously arose and with a dainty hand gripped one of his ragged sleeves as if to push him back.

"I s'pose, mum, a man can come where his wife is, and I've fetched the lines as can't be denied," the man muttered sullenly, as he halted, with his sunken eyes gleaming luridly beneath his bristling brows.

"My dear Mrs. Vanesse, perhaps the poor man is delirious with hunger," murmured the Countess Lora, who had leaned forward on an arm of the sofa and sat the picture of personified pity and tolerance.

"That is no reason why you two ladies must be frightened out of your wits, though," said an irritated voice, as the master of the house crossed the threshold. "I have a mind to send for an officer, you vagabond," he added sharply, as he speedily hustled the intruder away.

"My time will come soon or later—my time will come," the man muttered, as he shambled into the hall, and then, for a second, turned back with a lightning flash of menace in his lurid eyes.

Mrs. Vanesse followed him—as a precautionary measure, perhaps—or perhaps because with womanly compassion she did not wish him sent away, crazed with want, and desperate with rebuffs, from the midst of plenty.

"How strangely disturbed dear Mrs. Vanesse is! What could the poor man have meant?" the Countess Lora murmured, as she was left alone for the moment with the master of the house.

"He meant pilfering very likely, if he did not succeed in begging," Vanesse answered lightly, as he flung himself into the seat his wife had vacated, and fixed a look of intense and unrebuked admiration upon the magnificent creature beside him.

"We have had quite enough of pilfering, I should say," she commented with a musical little laugh.

"I should think so! I am half distracted about your heirloom sapphires, Lora," he answered regretfully.

"I wish you would drop the matter, Don," she said persuasively. "When one starts a lot of detectives by the promise of untold rewards, there are always such a lot of unpleasant developments."

"Why? How?" he questioned her.

"Oh, I am ready to imagine I scarcely know what since that poor man acted so oddly. But I should hesitate to suggest any theory—I am always so absurdly fanciful," she said with a little shrug of her magnificent shoulders.

"I don't follow you," Vanesse returned. "You surely can't connect the fellow with the theft of last night. If he were the thief, or an accomplice, he would hardly have ventured back here to-day—his guilty fears would have kept him as far away as possible."

"Not if by any chance he might surmise a more profitable mine yet to be worked," she responded rapidly in a voice abruptly lowered and almost inaudible to me, "not if he might have a hint of certain transactions which you have just effected. A quarter of a million of property cannot, though ever so cautiously, be converted into portability for a valise without inciting some prying individual to investigation and perhaps to cupidity. If yonder cabinet safe contains what I think it does, my Don, a little vigilance may not be amiss."

She had nestled her superb head against him, and her great magnetic eyes were upturned with a strangely eager and intent scrutiny upon his own. Neither guessed the library was occupied by a puzzled spectator of the little scene; and, being a detective, I felt I could be pardoned for not revealing my propinquity.

"You are quite right about the contents of that innocent-looking safe, ma belle," he smiled. "What is there means happiness in another land for you and me. And I shall be vigilant—never fear! Whoever would appropirate those contents must first walk over my dead body."

To this extraordinary conversation I had listened with amazement, and some edification also; but I had already settled my mode of procedure, and when presently Mrs. Don Vanesse tripped into the room I was snoring contentedly in the luxurious study chair, and only an energetic shaking from the master of the house aroused me at length to a consciousness of my surroundings.

"I have heretofore maintained the opinion that a detective always sleeps with one eye open, but yours were both closed sound enough," he observed with a furtive glance at my marvelously sleepy physiognomy. "And now we will take a view of the burglarized rooms, if you like," he added as I arose to await his wishes.

"I should like an opportunity to watch your servants when they are off guard. Suppose you keep me here as a visitor for the next twenty-four hours," I said when I had completed my inspection.

"You must do whatever you think best, of course," he assented, not very willingly. "I am anxious to have the sapphires recovered as speedily as possible; but I shouldn't like the Countess Lora to know your business here, though. She has peculiarly fastidious notions about many things, and she might feel annoyed," he finished.

"I believe Lora would rather the sapphires were never recovered than permit us to be disturbed in any way," Mrs. Vanesse said, with her pretty smile.

"Well, I only purpose to turn myself into an inspector of the plumbing, and so get an opportunity for a chat with your stylish housemaid," I told them.

CHAPTER TWO.

IN the capacity of inspector of the plumbing, always incidentally ready for a chat with the stylish-looking housemaid, I stayed the remainder of the day in the Vanesse household.

But at the end of the day I was quite as perplexed as I had been at the beginning.

"The servants know nothing about the missing sapphires—of that I am positive," I declared mentally, as I took a little stroll down the avenue in the misty dusk of what portended a tempestuous night. "Is some one of the inmates of the house a somnambulist, I wonder? Is the vagabond who managed to obtrude himself into the house—is he connected with the robbery? Was he altogether unknown to pretty Mrs. Vanesse? Is there some secret in her life associated with him? Was she startled by his appearance, as by a ghost from a past she would not have recalled, or was she only disturbed lest her titled and fastidious guest might be annoyed?" were the questions I asked myself, as I stopped and gazed back at the palatial mansion looming through the dripping trees of the little park into which I had purposely turned.

At the instant I perceived a prematurely bowed figure shambling up and down a walk just beyond me.

I suppressed an ejaculation of what was not wholly astonishment, for here was the vagabond intruder of whom I had been meditating. His gaze, too, was fixed upon the Vanesse palace, and he was obviously waiting for something or somebody.

In an instant I had hidden myself behind a convenient clump of shrubbery, and even as I crouched into my hiding place a woman, wrapped from head to foot in a black gossamer, came swiftly from the direction of the house and joined him.

As a disguise the ugly black gossamer of the modern generation, adroitly worn, is not to be surpassed.

And the identity of this woman was completely concealed even from my trained powers of discernment.

But after that somewhat impressive episode of the breakfast room I felt I should not be far from the right in pronouncing her to be the pretty Mrs. Vanesse.

"So you concluded to come," the man began, roughly and laconically.

Her answer was an undistinguishable murmur even to my alert aural sense.

But he seemed to become somewhat mollified, even though his manner was arrogant and menacing still.

"I am to have a cab waiting at twelve sharp," I distinctly heard him respond. "For what? Am I to be the instrument of some new deviltry? When you have done with me am I to be turned off again to tramp, beg, starve? No, madam, we are to share and share alike, or Don Vanesse and all your fine new friends shall know you for what you are."

The woman stepped a pace nearer to him and fiercely grasped a tattered sleeve in one of her black-gloved hands.

"I despise Don Vanesse! Do you hear me? I despise him!" she said.

I clearly heard the words, but the tones were unrecognizable with the huskiness of passion. But I believed I understood. Mrs. Vanesse had not been as unconscious as she seemed of her handsome husband's infatuation for the magnificent countess. And she was planning some sort of retaliation, which I was yet to comprehend. But this poor, tattered, venomous wretch—luckless and disreputable—what was he to her? What had he been to her in a past of which society knew nothing?

"And so you despise them all when the money is spent, or no longer to be handled by your greedy fingers. But you can't afford to despise me, madam, remember that," the man said, with threatening emphasis as she turned to leave him.

A moment later she was speeding back to the mansion, and then I crept from my hiding place, and some time later, after certain not unnecessary measures, I made my own way back to the house.

The drawing rooms were brilliantly lighted; a small but merry party had just dispersed, when I at length entered the study, where I purposed to station myself until midnight.

Mrs. Vanesse was not visible; only the master of the house and his titled guest lingered—he looking rather absent and uneasy, and she dazzling in a marvelous costume of amber satin with bands of dead gold upon her bare neck and superb arms.

And presently she too withdrew; the brilliant lights were extinguished; gradually the household noises were hushed; all the great mansion became dark and silent; and then Don Vanesse sauntered forth quietly into the study.

"You are here still? What have you discovered?" he queried.

"I have discovered several interesting complications," I said, so pointed that he winced.

"Oh, I know," he returned angrily; "you detective fellows are like one's lawyers and doctors—you have got to ferret out everything, pertinent and impertinent, before you will go about the thing wanted."

"And yet we impertinent fellows hold your honor, your lives, your property, more or less, in our keeping," I none too mildly reminded him.

"Hang it, man," he began resentfully, and then relapsed into an abrupt and listening silence.

For at the instant there was a peculiarly wary and muffled sound from the contiguous room—a sound as if somebody were fumbling about the innocent-looking cabinet safe to which the Countess Lora had so anxiously alluded.

"Whoever would appropriate the contents must first walk over my dead body," Don Vanesse had said, and in profound earnest, too, without a doubt.

In a second, at the ominous sound, his whole look and manner changed; the indolent and polished society man has become an aggressive and redoubtable individual, whom the most formidable of burglars would scarcely have cared to confront. Don Vanesse was thoroughly capable of protecting his own honor, his life or property—that was evident to me.

In that brief second, in the swiftness of a lightning flash, he had noiselessly opened the door, and in the darkness had pounced upon the marauder.

"For God's sake, don't fire!" I cried warnings, as I heard the click of his ready revolver.

I knew a woman was there, and that the woman was his own wife I supposed I had sufficient reason to believe.

I sprang after him and turned up the gas-light, which had not been entirely extinguished, and as I glanced none too calmly around the room I noted the contents of the safe scattered over the carpet.

And the foiled plunderer was the magnificent Countess Lora!

She was crouching backward upon her knees; Vanesse held her there in an unpitying grasp, with his revolver muzzle murderously near her handsome, terrified face.

I struck the weapon from his hold, pushed him unceremoniously aside, and slipped upon her superb wrists a pair of bracelets considerably less dainty than the heavy bands of gold she wore.

"Her accomplice is waiting for her in a cab below, guarded by a couple of officers whom I deemed necessary to employ earlier in the evening," I said. "You won't run away with a quarter of a million to-night, my handsome adventuress, and you might as well confess you stole your own sapphires to cover the theft of the Vanesse diamonds."

"I shall have a nice little story to tell which Vanesse may not like his wife to hear, though," she laughed viciously, as Vanesse turned scornfully away from her.

But that little story was never told to pretty Mrs. Don Vanesse. She was allowed to remain blissfully ignorant of her husband's brief infatuation, and also of the ridiculous suspicions which I had momentarily maintained against her.

The missing diamonds were found among the belongings of the deceptive guest, as were the sapphires—which, by the way, were not sapphires at all, but only the cheapest of imitations.

"I could not have believed her so wicked," gentle Mrs. Vanesse sighed, with a womanly pity which the culprit certainly did not deserve; "but then I did not know anything about her except what she herself had told me."

Of course the account of the romantic marriage with the Count Carundelle was a fable, and the count himself a myth.

The woman had been an adventuress all her life, and the forlorn vagabond was her legal husband. She was shrewd, wary, daring, and eminently successful in her adventures; and he refused to be abandoned by a spouse who could sustain him in lazy ease.

"In truth they were a pretty pair"; but at present they are safely housed in an institution provided gratuitously for celebrities of their special talents.

A PEANUT SHELL GAME

A CITY man got a glowing circular from a Chicago "development company" offering him ten acres of land in Florida for $2,500—a "peanut unit," the circular called it. He could grow (the circular said) 1,000 bushels of peanuts on his ten acres and sell his peanuts, allowing for low prices, at $2 a bushel.

The city man was impressed, but he sent the circular to the United States Department of Agriculture with an inquiry as to whether or not the investment was a good one.

Following are some sentences from the letter he got in reply: "The literature is of the kind designed to deceive city people in the North and West who do not know anything about farming. The average return from ten acres of peanuts would not exceed from $300 to $500. You can buy a 100-acre farm in almost any of the counties of western Florida, including the one mentioned in the circular, for the price these people ask for ten acres.

"The whole 'unit' system, whether it is pecans, peaches, figs, cane, peanuts, hogs, or what not, is simply a means of selling land at three to five times what it is worth to ignorant or unwary small investors. To pay $2,500 for this ten acres of land would stamp you as a 'sucker' of the rankest class. All this is without reflecting in any way on Florida, for it is a good State and lands are comparatively cheap there."

TRAPPING A PAIR OF CROOKS

BY FRANK WOODBURY.

I WAS stopping with a friend in Chicago at the time I first saw Carrie Grover.

She was a poor working girl, and as I had seen her pass the office of my friend many times, her sweet, sad, high-bred face attracted my attention and aroused my sympathies.

"Who is that girl, Carleton?" I asked.

"Which one?" he demanded.

"The little blonde with the delicate features and quick step—the one with that sad, tired look always resting on her face. She is a working girl, but decidedly above the common herd."

"So you have discovered so much," returned my friend, removing his cigar, the smile giving place to a serious expression. "I feel sorry for Carrie Grover. Yes, she has seen better days, and no mistake. She was once the petted daughter of a rich land-owner, who lived in the outskirts of the city. She is poor now, as you can see."

"I am interested. Will you give me the story, Carleton?"

"Certainly. It is brief enough. Gordon Grover, soon after the demise of his first wife, married a second, as beautiful a creature as the sun ever shone on, but between you and me she's a fiend.

"Only a year passed ere the rich man's only child was driven from home by the persecutions of her step-mother. A little later Gordon Grover died and cut his child off without a penny. It was wicked, but what could be done? Everything was willed to the handsome demon Grover called wife, and Carrie would not go back—she could not under the circumstances. She earns her living in one of the factories, and it is a hand-and-glove fight for subsistence."

"The will was probated without protest?"

"Yes."

"That is singular."

"It may seem so to you, but Carrie would sooner cut off her right hand than think of contesting the last will and testament of her deceased parent. She loved him deeply, and his course quite broke the poor girl's heart. She never offered to dispute the will—in fact, she believes it genuine—and consequently will not consent to a suit at law to recover her rights."

I was lost in reflection when my friend had ceased speaking. Here was a case that certainly needed investigation.

Gordon was reputed worth a million, and it did not seem just that an only child should work her fingers off in poverty while a cruel step-mother rolled in wealth. The case interested me deeply, and resulted in my calling on Miss Grover in her lodgings. I found her an intelligent, well-bred lady, bearing in her heart no false pride.

As the friend of Mr. Carleton, who in turn had been her father's friend, I succeeded in gaining the girl's confidence. I learned enough to satisfy me that all was not right in the affairs of the late Mr. Grover.

I discovered that the old man had loved his daughter dearly, that he did not wish her to leave his home, but that it was the step-mother who had driven her to the act, and she had secreted herself where the old land-owner failed to find her. They remained apart until the old man's last illness, when Carrie went back and remained with him in his last hours.

"Did he give you to understand that you were to be disinherited?" I asked, after I had listened to the girl's pathetic story.

"No. He was the same kind parent he had ever been, and said that I was provided for. When the will was probated I learned to the contrary."

"Yet you made no contest?"

"Why should I?"

A pair of honest blue eyes were upturned to my face.

"I could not go into court and dispute the wishes of my father. I was deeply grieved, but he meant to punish me, I suppose, for my infilial conduct."

"Did it not occur to you that undue influence had been used by Mrs. Grover?"

"No; I am sure father would do as he wished regardless of outside pressure. The will was dated when he was in the best of health. No, it was his wish, and I must submit."

Nevertheless, I could see that the girl was deeply troubled, and that constant brooding was wearing upon her. I was strangely interested in the case. I felt convinced there was rascality somewhere, and without the consent, without Miss Grover's knowledge, in fact, I entered upon an investigation of the case. But a little time had I been upon the lookout when I made discoveries of an interesting and startling nature.

The widow Grover had one confidant, a man young in years but old in sin, I believed. I saw them riding out together many times, and the gossips already coupled their names unpleasantly.

I soon discovered that Nugent Prentiss was a frequent visitor at the Widow Grover's mansion. They were indeed on intimate terms, and I resolved to watch them.

It was in a box in the theater that I first heard something that confirmed my suspicions. The two sat together, and the bright glow on the widow's face faded at a low word from her companion.

"Morgan Self has returned."

"Then he is alive?"

I fancied I heard a smothered gasp as the four words fell from the lips of Mrs. Grover.

"Yes. I haven't talked with him, but I think it would be well enough for you to see him, and the sooner the better. You are apparently secure, but there's no knowing at what moment some one may pry into our secrets. Carrie has friends, you know."

I heard no more then, but Prentiss and the widow left the theater at the end of the first act, and drove rapidly away.

I at once sprang into a taxi and ordered the driver to take me with all possible speed to the vicinity of the Grover house. I reached the place in advance of the widow and her companion, and advanced boldly up to the front entrance. I did not ring the bell, but pushed open the door boldly and entered the hall. I resolved on a bold move,

and could not do worse than fail. A light from a partially open door attracted me; I advanced and peered into a handsomely furnished parlor.

I did not go in.

A man, bearded and gray, sat at a table engaged in examining some papers. The sound of wheels stopping at the front of the house caused him to look up.

"Ah, the lady!" he exclaimed. "Won't she be astonished when she learns the truth? I wonder what has become of Miss Carrie? Can it be——"

Further speech was cut off by the sound of feet without. I at once glided into a shadowed nook under the stairs.

Mrs. Grover entered the house unaccompanied, removed her wraps in the hall, and then opened the door to the parlor.

On the threshold she paused with a low cry.

"Mrs. Grover, we meet again."

It was a man's voice uttering the words. I heard them distinctly.

"Morgan Self, where did you fall from?"

"Not from the sky, at any rate," answered the man with a laugh.

The widow passed in and closed the door.

I at once came forth and crouched on the threshold with my ear to the keyhole.

"Yes, we supposed you were drowned in the river. A body was found there and identified as yours, Morgan——"

"We?" interrupted the man. "Do you refer to Miss Carrfe and yourself?"

"I do."

"Where is that young lady? I'm sure she ought to be occupying her own house. The servant who admitted me asserted that she was not here, however.

"No. She's in good quarters, though."

"Undoubtedly. She is very magnanimous in permitting you to live in her house after what has happened. You treated her ill, and if I were in her place I'd send you adrift, now that I was in complete possession."

"Would you be so cruel?" said the lady softly, with the purr of a tigress. "Well, I am still here, as you see. Now, Morgan, I wish to ask you a question."

"Proceed."

"What became of that will?"

"What will?"

"You know without asking."

"The one that Gordon Grover made on the very last day of his illness, to which are attached, as witnesses, the names of Nugent Prentiss and Morgan Self—the last will and testament of Mr. Grover, in which all his property, save a fair annuity, goes to his beloved daughter Carrie? Yes, I know where it is. I assure you that it is safe, and will be probated to-morrow."

"It's not in the hands of the probate judge?"

The question was asked in a gasp.

"Oh, no, I'm not quite a fool. I stole the will for a purpose. I know how you have pulled the wool over the eyes of the public with that will that was made after the death of Gordon Grover. Yes, it is the latest will; so late, in fact, as not to have met the eyes of its purported maker. I have you and your dear Nugent on the hip," and the speaker laughed provokingly.

"What is it you want?"

"Money."

"We all like that. I am not rich, Morgan," said the faltering voice of the woman.

"Oh, no, of course not. My dear girl, a state prison yearns for you."

"Don't threaten. Tell me what you must have—how much money will shut your mouth and place the will in my hands?"

"Fifty thousand."

"What?"

"Fifty thousand dollars will settle the bill, madam—not a cent less."

"You are mad. I cannot raise half the amount—not a quarter."

"Very well. I bid you good-night."

The sound of shuffling feet fell on my ear. I was ready to dart away at a moment's notice. But the man did not come out.

"Stop, Morgan Self," cried the pleading voice of the pretty widow. "Listen to reason."

"Go on."

"I will give you a thousand——"

"Fifty thousand or nothing," he grated coldly.

"Spare me!"

"I know on which side my bread's buttered. I shall visit Carrie Grover this very night. The Garden City will ring with your crime to-morrow, madam."

"No, no! You must not go."

I darted back under the stairs as Morgan Self rushed into the hall. He had drawn a slouch hat low upon his brow, and he strode down the hall and passed quickly out into the night.

Mrs. Grover staggered into the hall, and stood there in the dim light, with clasped hands and gleaming eyes, the very picture of despair.

A minute later she was joined by Nugent Prentiss.

"He has left. What did he say? Did he have the lost will?"

In breathless eagerness the man asked his questions.

"He has it, and is even now on his way to Carrie Grover," moaned the widow.

"No!"

"It is true. In one hour I am a ruined woman, and you, Nugent, go down with me."

The man uttered an imprecation.

"It must not be," he grated at length.

"What will you do, Nugent?"

"I will see that Morgan Self never reaches Carrie Grover. I will get there in advance of the infernal dog."

Then Nugent Prentiss flung aside the widow's hands and rushed from the house.

I crouched under the broad stairs, not caring to reveal myself to the scheming widow.

"My soul!" she gasped, clutching her heart, "must all my dreams end in ruin? I did not think it would come to this. If the first will—the real will—had been destroyed, all would be well; but that bears a later date than the one probated, and it gives all but a mere pittance to Carrie Grover. I could not induce the old fool to do better by me. He loved his child too well. I should have enough, but she must have the bulk. I could have strangled him for that. It was Nugent who suggested the forgery, and if the true will had not been lost all would have been well.

"I mistrusted that that man stole the will. He was a sharp one, after all, and we took him to be more than half fool. We were the fools! With Morgan Self it was a money-making scheme. But Nugent will meet him before he sees Carrie, and he can get the will, and then we are safe for good."

With clenched hands and harsh breathing Mrs. Grover retired to the parlor to await the return of her lover.

This was my opportunity, and I improved it.

Gliding quickly from the house, I turned my steps in the direction of Carrie Grover's lodging house. I knew that

this was the objective point of the man I wished to interview, Morgan Self.

What Nugent Prentiss had in mind I did not know, but I believed he would not hesitate to commit a crime, if need be, to secure Mrs. Grover and himself in the fortune they had secured by forgery.

With rapid strides I crossed the space between the Grover mansion and the humble lodging house of Carrie, the sewing girl.

I reached the vicinity none too soon.

A dim light from a solitary and distant lamp shed its glow over the front of the unprepossessing wooden building—the boarding house for working girls, presided over by Madam Henshaw.

A man was leaning against the gate.

From a direction opposite to myself was another hurrying quickly forward.

The man at the gate turned and faced the one approaching.

"Nugent Prentiss!" exclaimed the man.

"I am Nugent Prentiss," answered the last comer, "and I recognize you, Mr. Self. What are you doing here? Come home with me. I would like to talk over old times."

A low, metallic laugh fell from the lips of Morgan Self.

"Old times! That was when you were poor—before the Widow Grover met with a bonanza."

"Hush, man! Come with me."

"No. I have visited the she-tiger. I made her a fair proposition. I will do nothing further. I shall speak with the girl."

"Carrie?"

"Of course."

"You are on the wrong track, man; she does not stop here—she is out of the city."

"I do not believe it."

For a moment dead silence reigned, then Self lifted the latch and was about to pass through the gate.

He did not do so, however.

Nugent Prentiss leaned forward, a dark object swept through the air, followed by a sullen noise, and Morgan Self sank noiseless to the walk.

Quickly Prentiss bent over his victim and fumbled on the inside of his coat. He drew forth a packet of papers with an exultant cry. The words died on his lips, however.

Without a groan the thug sank beside his victim.

I knew the easiest way to deal with this crook was to tap him with the butt of my revolver, which I did without compunction. He was as senseless now as was the man he had felled.

I secured the papers, and in the dim light made sure that one was the last will and testament of Gordon Grover, bearing the date two months later than the one which had been admitted to probate, and which was a clever forgery.

Mr. Prentiss recovered his senses soon, to find a pair of handcuffs on his wrists, and a policeman, whom I had summoned, bending over him.

"This is an outrage!" foamed the rascal when the officer led him away; but his protest went unheeded.

Morgan Self, who had been sand-bagged, lay insensible a long time. I was obliged to call a taxi and have him conveyed to a hospital.

Then I repaired to my friend Carleton, and received his congratulations on the work I had done.

"I think this is the genuine will," said Carleton, after examining the document. "Mr. Prentiss and the widow are in a tight box."

"And Carrie, poor girl, will get her rights."

"It looks that way," admitted the lawyer.

Carleton took charge of the case from that time, and worked with a vim to convict Prentiss and Mrs. Grover.

Morgan Self proved an important witness. He had signed the will in company with Prentiss, and had afterwards abstracted the same from a desk in the sick room. He then fled the city, and caused a report of his death to be circulated. His object in stealing the will was to turn it to account afterward.

He had no hand in the forgery, however.

Let me state briefly that Prentiss and Mrs. Grover were convicted of forgery after a long trial, and both were sent to prison for a five years' term.

Morgan Self disappeared immediately after the trial, and no attempt was ever made to molest him for his part in the evil work against Carrie Grover. As for the girl, she came into possession of her father's estate, and at the present writing is a happy wife and mother.

THE GOLDEN PLOVER'S LONG FLIGHT

AMAZING as are the recent flights of airplanes across the Atlantic, aviators must fly farther and do it more frequently to warrant a literal appellation of 'bird men,'" says a bulletin of the National Geographic Society, which calls attention to the golden plover which summers in the Arctic and winters in Argentina.

The bulletin, based on a communication to the society by a noted naturalist, describes the perennial aerial tour of "our greatest traveler," as follows:

"This species nests along the Arctic coast of North America, and as soon as the young are old enough to care for themselves fall migration is begun by a trip to the Labrador coast, where the plover fattens for several weeks on the abundant native fruits. A short trip across the Gulf of St. Lawrence brings it to Nova Scotia, the starting point for its extraordinary ocean flight, due south to the coast of South America.

"The golden plover takes a straight course across the ocean, and, if the weather is propitious, makes the whole 2,400 miles without pause or rest. But if tempests arise, it may be blown out of its course to the New England coast and start anew on the advent of fair weather; or it may rest for a few days at the Bermudas, one-third of the way along its course, or at the nearest of the Lesser Antilles, 600 miles from the mainland of South America. These, however, are emergency stop-overs, to be resorted to only in case of storms. Having accomplished its ocean voyage, it passes across eastern South America to its winter home in Argentina.

"After a six months' vacation here, the plover finds its way back to the Arctic by an entirely different route. It travels across northwestern South America and the Gulf of Mexico, reaching the United States along the coasts of Louisiana and Texas. Thence it moves slowly up the Mississippi Valley and by early June is again at the nesting site on the Arctic coast. Its round trip has taken the form of an enormous ellipse, with a minor axis of 2,000 miles and a major axis stretching 8,000 miles from Arctic America to Argentina."

A DETECTIVE'S MISTAKE

A Serial Story

By GILBERT MACKEY

CHAPTER TWENTY

SIM SCUDDER CORRECTS HIS MISTAKE AT LAST—THE END.

BOWERY MAG, followed by the young man whom she had given the iron ring, quietly entered the vestibule of the old Chrystie street church, and closed the door behind her.

The street door of the church stood partly open, above which burned a transparency inviting the wayfarer in.

About the door there was no one to be seen.

Now, had Mistress Mag been laboring under less excitement than she was, she might have observed a man watching her movements with gleaming eyes from behind the half open door.

"This way!" she whispered, seizing her companion by the arm and drawing him down the flight of stairs which opened from the right of the vestibule leading to the Sunday-school room in the basement of the church; "this way, young lady—don't lose a moment, for I fear that even now it is too late."

The man crept after them silently.

Young lady!

Why did Bowery Mag persist in this form of expression in addressing one clearly of the sterner sex.

But stay—is this well-dressed young fellow with the light mustache so clearly a man, after all?"

Those eyes, that well-rounded form, and surely, upon closer inspection, it appears highly probable that this blonde mustache is false.

A young lady masquerading in the clothes of a man!

Evidently that is just what Mistress Mag takes this person to be.

Leading the way into the Sunday-school room, which was, of course, entirely dark, Mag softly closed the door behind her, and seizing her companion by the hand, fell upon her knees, kissed that hand again and again, weeping bitter tears.

"Oh, my dear young lady!" she exclaimed, "from this night abandon this dress forever and assume the garments of our sex. Others know you as well as myself, know you as Jennie Dorris. Strange your own father should be so blind. It can lead to nothing but trouble and sorrow. God keep you from knowing such sorrow as I have known."

It was indeed the daughter of the restaurant keeper disguised in the garments of a man.

From the moment of leaving the court room, she had determined to devote herself to solving the mystery which enshrouded the crime of which her lover stood condemned.

She it was who had been the unwitting cause of poor Andy's misfortune, who had called Sim Scudder's attention to Maurice Barrytown as he was leaving Shampansky's saloon.

She had thought herself secure from all observation. Great was her astonishment, therefore, to learn that the sharp eyes of Bowery Mag had not been deceived.

But there was no disposition upon the part of the girl to listen to this woman's protestations of repentance, even though they were sincere.

"Come—come!" she said. "Let us waste no time in talk. Why have you brought me here? Tell me—quick!"

"To save life!" replied Mag, as quickly, staggering to her feet.

"Listen, Jennie— if your name may be pronounced by one so steeped in sin as I—listen, and I will tell you all.

"Alfred Constantine is innocent of the murder of Edson Gaylord. The crime was committed by a man whom I once loved, and, God help me! still love more than life. He has beaten me, spurned me, wronged me fearfully, but I love him in spite of all. He it was who, with my aid, spirited away the boy Andrew Fenn. He has been imprisoned in the sub-cellar of this old church, the very existence of which is unknown to those who now sing and pray in the room above."

"And you will lead me to him—you will supply me with the evidence of this scoundrel's guilt?"

"I cannot testify against him, but I will lead you to the boy Fenn, and help you to set him free. The rest must remain in his hands. He knows all now and can save the life of his friend."

"But the name of this wretch—only tell me his name!"

"His name is—— But, no, I cannot speak it! Come, let us make haste. Every moment we delay is fatal, for I know that he intends to make way with his prisoner this very night."

She led the way to the rear of the room, and stooping down behind the little pulpit, hastily struck a match.

Pulling aside the carpet, a trap-door was revealed.

Both women seized the iron ring attached to it. The trap-door was slowly raised.

A flight of steps, leading into a cellar, stood disclosed.

Leaving the trap-door open behind them, they descended, and Mag, taking the lead, they groped their way across the cellar to the furthermost end.

Here the woman lighted match after match, and examined the floor eagerly.

"Here it is!" she exclaimed. "Thank God, I've found it at last."

Meanwhile a strong smell of smoke had begun to pervade the cellar.

It seemed to grow more and more dense with every moment of time.

As Bowery Mag spoke she hastily kneeled, and seizing a short bit of rope, which appeared to be imbedded in the wooden floor of the cellar raised a second trap-door.

As she did so a volume of smoke, black and stifling, rushed through the opening and almost drove them back.

"Great God! He has fired the place!" cried the wretched

Mag. "Villain that he is, he means to burn the boy alive! Can we save him? I fear it is too late!"

"Let the boy go, and think of yourself, traitress!" said a deep voice from the darkness just behind the pair. "I've been watching your tricks and your wiles, and were it not that I desired the satisfaction of killing you with my own hands I would send you down to roast with that meddling boy as I do this soft young fool."

At the same instant a man sprang between the disguised Jennie and the woman Mag, and seizing the former, raised her slight form in his arms and flung her bodily into the burning sub-cellar, slamming the trap-door above her head.

"Fiend, monster!" cried the woman, springing away in horror. "Maurice Barrytown, if ever there was a wretch on earth that wretch is you! Are you not satisfied with the crimes you have already committed, that you must add one more murderous stain to your already blackened soul? Help, help! Oh, my God! Is there none to help? Help! Good people, there's murder being done here! This way, for the love of God!"

She dashed across the cellar before the man could raise a hand to prevent her; she rushed into the Sunday-school room above.

"Hush, you hag! May the foul fiend fly away with your noisy tongue! Curse you, Mag, do you think you can escape me thus? Another cry and I'll kill you as I would a dog!"

Barrytown sprang after her, and strove to lay hands upon her flying form.

In the darkness she eluded his grasp, and dashing among the benches of this room devoted to the worship of God by innocent youth, gained the stairs beyond, the old church fairly ringing with her cries.

"Help! help! Murder! murder! This way, good people! There's a murderer here!"

The smoke had penetrated this portion of the church now, and was forcing its way to the floor above, a thick, stifling mass.

Crack! crack! crack!

Three pistol shots rang out with fearful intensity in the confined room beneath the old mission church.

Their aim had been true.

A woman lay bleeding, dying at the foot of the stairs.

"Thus perishes the last person whom I have to fear," cried Maurice Barrytown, springing across her bleeding form.

"Farewell, Mag! Had you remained true to me, it might have been otherwise; as it is, I'm off to Europe for a gay life and a merry one, and you——"

"Say rather for the gallows, Maurice Barrytown," cried a deep voice from the darkness. "I have you at last, man of many crimes! Your race is run—I arrest you in the name of the law for the murder of Edson Gaylord and the abduction of Andrew Fenn!"

It was Sim Scudder, the detective.

He flung one powerful arm about the form of his former friend as he spoke, and snapped a pair of handcuffs about his wrists.

At the same moment the rush of many feet was heard, and the whole congregation of the Chrystie street mission, headed by the aged preacher, appeared upon the scene.

Before any one had time to utter a word, Bowery Mag had dragged herself, faint and bleeding, to the detective's feet.

"Hurry—I'm dying—carry me to Shampansky's around the corner—quick, quick, the church is in flames—save the life of Andy Fenn!"

* * * * * *

"Herman," said Mr. A. Shampansky, addressing the stolid German, whose valuable services he employed as assistant in his Bayard street saloon, "you shoost go dot cellar into und fetch up ein fresh keg of peer. I expect to do a rushing peezness to-night. By schiminey Chreesmas; vot do all dose beobles vont?"

A strange gathering had paused before the house, and were even now ascending the steps of the industrious Mr. Shampansky's saloon.

At their head strode Detective Scudder, following him was the red-nosed Mr. Dorris, his face ornamented with a most sickly smile, who, assisted by two other brethren of the mission fold, carried between them the fainting form of Bowery Mag, behind whom strode the aged preacher of the "Midnight Mission," his hand firmly clutched about the handcuffed murderer's, Maurice Barrytown, arm.

A dozen determined men from the Chrystie street mission brought up the rear.

"The under vault, Shampansky," said Scudder sternly. "Lead the way to your secret store-house, you wily old fence. You are trapped at last! Your race is run! Lead the way to that secret passage—quick! Trot, or I'll put some life into you with this!"

A glittering revolver was thrust into the face of the Polish Jew.

One quick glance and he had comprehended the scene. He looked from Barrytown to the detective, from the detective to Barrytown again.

"It's all up, Sham," said the latter coolly. "You'd better do as he tells you."

"All ride, schentlemens; anything to oblige gustomers. Eef you follow me I leads de vay."

Several brethren of the mission followed the detective to the cellar, the saloon-keeper going too.

As a matter of precaution, the detective ordered the preacher to lead the prisoner in advance of all the rest.

"There's a bullet ready for you, Maurice," he said quietly, "so sure as you deviate one inch in your walk from the straightest of straight lines."

Bowery Mag meanwhile was laid upon the floor of the saloon and cared for by tender hands.

They gained the cellar; the secret passage was opened up; all stood before the iron door.

As it opened, yielding to Shampansky's touch upon the secret spring, a dense volume of smoke rolled forth.

At the same instant the half naked and bleeding form of a young man arose, as from the ground beneath their feet, and dragged toward them the body of Andy Fenn, handcuffed, and with legs securely bound.

"Save him—for God's sake save him!" cried a girlish voice, in agonized tones. "Save him, for the love of God, for I can do no more!"

* * * * * *

Of all the secrets in story-writing, perhaps the most important is to know when one has said enough.

Our story is told. The play is played of this dark mystery, which for a whole year has gathered about that most simple and harmless of all musical appliances—a banjo string. There is little more to tell.

Rescued from the very gallows itself, upon the following day—the day set upon which he was to die—Al Constantine walked forth from the Tombs a free man, his innocence established before the eyes of the world.

Kind friends rose up on every hand to assist this long-suffering youth, to help right his well-nigh blasted life.

For the murder of Edson Gaylord the wretched Barrytown in due course of time paid the full penalty of the law.

To know that her husband had taken her brother's life for so mean a motive as the possession through her of

his life insurance was more than his unfortunate wife could stand.

She passed away from sheer grief and shame, alone, two weeks before the hanging took place.

Bowery Mag died that night.

Shampansky, for receiving stolen goods, is now learning the shoe business at nothing a day, under government care.

Kind and sympathetic hands assisted in lowering the remains of the unfortunate woman into her humble grave.

The aged preacher from the "Midnight Mission" pronounced the final words.

"Let those who are without sin among you cast the first stone.

"Friends, this woman died in the endeavor to undo the evil she had wrought—died in the endeavor to do what she knew was right, though that endeavor might cost her life. My friends, at my grave, I have no higher wish than that the same may be said of me!"

The aged preacher holds forth to wandering sinners at the "Midnight Mission" still—the old Chrystie street church was burned to the ground.

As for that red-nosed hypocrite, John Dorris, just about this time he found it for the good of his health to remove from the Holly Tree Inn to parts unknown.

That he had been the tool of Maurice Barrytown in the whole matter was certain. Had he remained in New York, doubtless he would have paid the penalty for his perjury that he richly deserved.

Through the efforts of the good old preacher, the Holly Tree Inn is now conducted in such a manner as to render it a true haven of rest and refreshment to the tired wanderer through the streets of New York.

Sim Scudder still pursues the even tenor of his way, and, despite of his terrible mistake, is one of the most highly-esteemed detectives on the force.

Just at present he is engaged in breaking Andy Fenn into the detective line, and an excellent officer the boy promises to make.

None of our friends play the banjo now—too many bitter memories cling around the sounds which proceed from the thrumming of the strings.

Nevertheless, Sim Scudder keeps a certain dog-headed, gold-mounted banjo hanging in his room as a reminder of the one great error of his official career.

Andy Fenn has no banjo—swears he would not accept the finest ever made as a gift, and with Al Constantine—now a trusted clerk in the office of a successful merchant—it is the same.

Nevertheless, we observed the other night, while we sat at the cozy tea table of Mr. and Mrs. Constantine—the latter formerly Miss Jennie Dorris, cashier of the Holly Tree Inn—listening to this tale from the lips of that firm friend of the couple, Andy Fenn, as the head of the little household—there is now a child or two—sat listening to the narrative of the strange adventures, which we were noting down for publication, keeping the left hand of his pretty wife within his own, and toying carelessly with a curious, antique-looking iron ring which she wore, that his eyes wandered now and then to a piece of silver-wound catgut with which his friend illustrated the most salient points of his tale.

It was the cause of all the trouble.

It was a broken banjo string.

(*The End.*)

A new serial begins in our next number.

HE TROD 162,000 MILES

WALKING in a circle never more than ten feet in diameter, Hugh White, an aged inmate of the Johnson Coupnty, Iowa, Poor Farm, who died in that institution recently, had traveled, according to the officials, 162,000 miles in thirty-seven years without stepping outside the boundaries of the farm.

When White first entered the poor farm he was possessed of an obsession to walk in a circle, and day in and day out he walked, always in a circle. In good weather he made his path in the yard; in bad weather his circle lay within the walls of his little room. But the officials estimate he walked a distance more than six times around the world during his stay. But he didn't know he was walking aimlessly. He always had an objective point.

"Guess I'll make a trip to Paris to-morrow," he would say. And the next morning he started on the journey. Hour after hour he walked, day after day. Every night he stopped, always at some imaginary city. Rivers, lakes, oceans cut no figure; if they were in his way he walked over them, never taking the trouble to do any swimming.

Some days he would announce to the other inmates that he had reached Paris, and for a day or two he would rest. Then he started on the back track for Iowa. On the outbound trip he always kept accurate count of the number of days the journey took, and he always tried to beat his "time" on the return trip. If the trip was a long one he usually succeeded in doing this by about one day.

In hot weather White usually went north—sometimes as far as the North Pole. And no matter how torrid the weather, when he crossed into the Arctic regions he always put on all the clothing he had. On the return trip he gradually discarded the extra garments. And when winter came, he took a trip south. Sometimes he stopped in Florida or Southern California. At other times he went all the way to the tropics. In the latter he had small use for clothing, and upon those occasions he wore the minimum permitted by the law.

Shoes? White wore out all the shoes he could get at first; then for years and years he traveled barefoot. The officials had taught him that was the proper way to walk—the most healthful way. So, when he started on one of his long journeys he carefully removed his shoes. When he finished his walking task for the day he put them on again.

Six hours every day he permitted himself to walk; and he made a speed of just about two miles an hour.

"Twelve miles a day is enough for any man to walk," he used to tell his friends. "That's just enough to keep in good health. If I walk faster I can't enjoy the scenery."

In his younger days, when he first came to the poor farm, he was not so particular and often made eighteen or twenty miles a day. As he grew older, however, his speed decreased.

"I'm the greatest traveler in the world," he often said. "I've been to every country I ever heard of, I've been to every city in the world, and I've been to the North Pole and the South Pole. I'd go to the moon, but I can't walk across space."

Out in the yard at the poor farm there are several circles trodden down many inches in the earth. In White's little room his feet actually made a plainly discernible circle on the pine floor.

STRANGE EXPERIENCES

SIGNS AND OMENS

AT a farewell banquet given to my old friends before I got married, thirteen of us sat at the table. The day I was married was the 13th of the month. When on my honeymoon trip, I met thirteen cross-eyed people, broke a mirror, and passed under a painter's ladder. Here's how the hoodoo worked out: Upon our return home my father-in-law presented me with a newly furnished house, and took me in partnership in his business. My wife inherited a small fortune from her deceased aunt, and we never had a day's sickness, when we settled down to housekeeping. In fact, since then my wife and I have enjoyed exceptional good luck, and nobody can convince me that the above-mentioned incidents are harbingers of ill-fortune.

JACK V.

CAN THE DEAD RETURN?

A FRIEND of mine was a confirmed spiritualist—a member of the Swedenborgian church. About a year ago he was taken very sick, and I called to see him. Alone in the bedroom with him I saw he was failing fast. "I am soon going to pass over," he said to me, "but should conditions be right, I shall return and make my presence known to you on the 5th of next December at precisely ten o'clock at night." I was skeptical and laughed. "It can't be done, Frank," I answered, for I had no faith in his belief. "Once a man is dead, he can't return." He smiled. "Very well," he said, "I will convince you." Next day he died. In the year that followed I forgot all about the uncanny circumstance. But when the 5th of December arrived I was forcefully reminded of his promise by a peculiar incident. I opened the dictionary to see the meaning of a word, when Frank's photograph fell out from between the leaves where I had put it over a year previously. The sight of it, of course, reminded me of his dying words, and I began to get nervous, and glanced at the clock. It struck nine. In another hour I was to learn if the dead could materialize. At half-past nine the furniture began to crack, and the gas went down of its own accord. At quarter to ten I noticed a stifling change in the air in the room, followed by slight draughts, as if persons were rapidly passing. I sat down by the table, and waited curiously, but I must confess I became more nervous as I kept my eye on the hands of the clock, and saw them nearing the hour of ten. The suspense was very disagreeable. Just as the clock began to strike the appointed time, I looked around, half expecting to see a white spectral form, but none appeared. Instead, the table suddenly began to move from under my elbow, which nestled on it, and shot across the room, where it brought up against the wall with a bang. I might have pushed it with my arm, but am not sure. Down came several pictures from the wall, but, strangely enough, the glasses were not broken. I heard an awful explosion of coal in the grate, which blew several live coals out on the carpet, but the glow died out instantly and the carpet was only slightly scorched. "Hello, Frank," I called, "is that you?" There was no answering voice, but I heard a furious rapping sound on the table. Then there was silence. All of these occurrences were strictly natural, yet unusual, as they all happened together. Was it a manifestation of the presence of my friend? Was he there, unable to materialize so I could see him, unable to speak, so I could converse with him, yet powerful enough in magnetic force to cause the sounds and movements I had witnessed? There was certainly something odd about these happenings at the precise time he had threatened to return, yet, what did occur, was not at all psychological. It might have been a mere coincidence. But it was queer enough to impress me with a feeling that after all there may be something tangible in spiritualism.

LUCY G. DE GROOT.

THE DOG'S SIXTH SENSE?

NOT long ago I was hunting wild rabbits in Ranger's Woods, at the foot of Mount Washington, and came to a swamp at nightfall, where I paused to camp with my hunting dog, Rex. About two o'clock in the morning I was awakened in my tent by hearing the dog utter an unearthly howl. He stood in the tent entrance, glaring toward the swamp, his hair bristling, his eyes like balls of fire, and between his howls he kept up a doleful whining. Wondering what excited him, I looked out, but I failed to see any one. Then Rex rushed toward the trees behind the tent, and, suddenly pausing in a small clearing, he barked furiously, as if at some one standing in front of him. Not a soul was in sight, yet the dog grew more excited every instant, and sprang at some unseen object, snarling and snapping, as if he were attempting to bite some one. But to me it looked as if he were practicing on some imaginary enemy. I was puzzled and feared he had gone mad; yet, when I called him, he became docile enough. I made a careful examination of the spot, but found no trace of any human being. Then Rex started again. This time he acted as if chasing some one. Up the trail, then zigzagged around several more trees at top speed. When he started off in a straight line, his course took him square to the edge of the swamp, where he paused, barking as if some one he thought he was chasing had gone out into the marsh. Thinking his brain was affected, I finally called him into the tent, where he remained quiet the rest of the night. Next day we left there, and two days later returned home in Boston. There I saw an account in the paper of a farmer having found the skeleton of a man in the swamp where I had been camping. When I recalled to mind my dog's strange actions, I was convinced that Rex must have seen the ghost of that dead man. Of course this superstitious theory may seem far-fetched to skeptical people, but I have heard that psychologists claim that dogs can see spectral visitations, although I do not know how true or false the theory may be.

HARRY BUNKER MURRAY.

CURRENT NEWS

MARE IS MOTHER OF A MULE AND A HORSE

John Outlaw, a farmer of Union Township, Vandenburg County, Ind., was surprised when he found one of his mares had given birth to twin colts. But he was more surprised when he learned that one of the colts was a mule and the other a horse. The case is the first of its kind in that section of the country.

WEDS "LIFE OF FUNERAL"

A Topeka, Kansas, household has lost the services of a maid faithful for many years. Recently the maid confronted her mistress with this statement: "You'll have to get along without my services any more. You remember last week I went to a funeral. You remember I was all dressed up. Well, I'm going to marry the husband of that corpse. He said I was the life of that there funeral."

VOLCANO IN LAKE KILLS FISH

Residents of Klamath County, Ore., are at a loss to account for the unprecedented eruption which occurred recently in Diamond Lake. Thousands of fish were killed and waters of the entire lake were discolored. Diamond Lake is located about nine miles from Crater Lake and is a favorite haunt of fishermen. News of the disturbance was brought to Klamath Falls by R. E. Clanton, State Master Fish Warden, and H. D. Stout, Deputy Game Warden. Mr. Clanton and Mr. Stout believe the destruction of the fish was caused by an under-water volcanic eruption.

ANGLER'S ASHES ON WAVES

The ashes of the late W. C. Boschen, of New York, famous as a swordfish angler, were thrown on the waves twelve miles from Avalon, Cal., one day recently by Capt. George C. Farnsworth, his former boatman, to whom he devised a legacy of $25,000. This was in accordance with wishes expressed by Boschen when he last visited Avalon, shortly before his death, Nov. 15, 1918. Capt. Farnsworth went out to sea alone in his launch. At noon he spread a lunch for two. He ate half. Then he smoked a cigar. Then he threw the ashes of Boschen upon the waves.

TOBACCO HELPED

To the use of tobacco was attributed her longevity by Mrs. Mary Jane Adgate, aged eighty-two years, who died in her home on Thomas street, Westfield, Mass. Mrs. Adgate smoked a pipe for years, beginning the habit when she was a little girl.

She acquired a taste for tobacco from her grandmother, who was a pipe smoker. She had no use for the weed in any other form but the pipe smoking, and secured the greatest amount of pleasure out of one of the old familiar clay "T. D." pipes.

She had been in failing health for some time, but even during her sickness would not depart from her habit of smoking a pipe.

232,196 INDIANS OF PURE BLOOD LEFT

Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his annual report, submitted to the Secretary of the Interior, computes the population of pure blood Indians in the country at 232,196 and of the five civilized tribes, covering freed men and inter-married with whites, 101,506, making a total of 333,702. Their estimated earnings for the last year were $12,802,547, of which the civilized tribes earned $8,910,722. There are 5,000 Indians in New York, remnants of the Iroquois League, who own seven reservations, comprising 80,000 acres.

There are 84,922 Indian children eligible for school instruction, of whom 60,889 are in attendance.

FARMS FOR RAISING WOMEN'S HAT FEATHERS

The rhea, a bird from whose plumage many hat feathers come, is well protected by law in its native land of Argentina, according to the *Millinery Bulletin*.

"There are laws and restrictions in the Argentine Republic which prohibit the slaughter of birds under heavy penalties and fines," says the *Bulletin*. "In very remote territories it is possible that there are considerable difficulties in enforcing the law, but in most parts it is in full force. The extinction of the species is out of the question, because there are entire farms and estates which are increasing every year and where a great number of birds are kept, of which the total product annually ranges from 15,000 to 25,000 kilos of feathers, all live, domesticated birds. We absolutely guarantee the truth of this statement and can have it corroborated by the owners of the extensive estates and farms where the birds are breeding and living in complete liberty."

WHAT ONE EGG DID

An old farmer and his son were at work in the field near the roadside when his son discovered a dead turkey, which probably was discarded by another farmer who was on his way to the market. Both were curious to learn the cause of its death. They brought the turkey to the barn, dissected the fowl's body and obtained an egg. The boy set the egg and the result was a fine turkey gobbler that was sold the next summer for $5. With this money the boy purchased a pig. The next summer the young capitalist sold his sow and eight pigs for $50. He then bought two thoroughbred heifers. The ensuing fall he had two milch cows and calves which he sold for $200. His final investment was in two one-year-old filly colts. After a lapse of five years the lad was the custodian of two good mares and $1,000 in gold which he procured in the sale of their colts. And to-day this farmer's son is studying agriculture and animal husbandry in a State university as the result of one turkey egg.

UP-TO-DATE

Although Honolulu is almost in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and 2,000 miles away from the American mainland, yet the Hawaiian capital shows its Americanism and right up-to-dateness by having traffic police officers at all intersections of streets in the down-town section. Honolulu has about 2,400 automobiles owing to its splendid streets and the roads which encircle the island, the circuit of which can be made in a single day. The traffic down-town has become so dense that practically all the police department's foot force on day duty has been organized into a traffic corps, uniformed in olive drab. Most of the officers are Hawaiians, but there is an occasional Irishman.

PAID A GHOST'S DEBTS

An amazing story of an old woman's superstition came before Judge Drummond at Balieborough, County Cavan, in the course of an action brought by Miss Anne Brady against a local farmer named Connell.

The plaintiff said that in June last the defendant told her that the ghost of her brother Phil, who had been dead twenty-six years, was haunting him because he forgot to pay defendant 70 shillings he owed him. The witness was frightened and paid the money, which the defendant swore on "the poker and tongs" was due. The defendant said he, after Phil died, walked nine miles to the wake to see if he could get an opportunity of mentioning the debt, but he was not given a chance. He denied having said anything whatever about Phil's ghost. His honor, in giving judgment, said he firmly believed the story.

WILL MAKE OLD YOUNG

Discussing Dr. Voronoff's report to the Paris Surgical Congress, announcing that by grafting intestitial glands on old he goats and rams he made them frisk like kids and lambs, and that he saw no reason why, by grafting the intestitial gland of a monkey on an old man his youthful strength should not be restored to him, the *Chronicle's* medical correspondent points out that the late Sir Victor Horsley investigated the effects of grafting the glands of lower animals on human beings.

The conclusion at which he and his co-workers arrived was that the results, though good, were very ephemeral and that, in order to obtain any real benefit constantly repeated grafting operations were necessary. It was found that results equally good in their immediate effects could be obtained by taking extracts from these glands through the mouth or by injecting them under the skin so that, except in very rare cases in which oral or subcutaneous methods cannot, for some reason, be tolerated, grafting operations are now never practiced.

IRON TURNED TO COPPER

A curious find was made in one of the copper mines at El Cobre, Cuba, recently. These mines, once among the richest in the world, was abandoned for a long time on account of the insurrections in Cuba against the Spanish rule. In 1868 the coal supply was cut off by the insurgents, and consequently pumping became impossible and the mines became filled with water. After the Spanish War an American company bought the mines and proceeded to pump out the water. In one of the shafts thus made accessible was found what once represented an iron pick-ax, as well as some crowbars. The metal in these implements had, it is said, turned to copper. Extraordinary as this may appear, it can be scientifically explained. The water, filtering through the rock and the copper-ore veins, dissolved some of the copper, the solution containing sulphate of copper. As soon as the sulphuric acid in this solution touched the iron it at once dissolved that metal and deposited copper in its place, for sulphuric acid has a greater affinity for iron than for copper. In the process certain impurities which had existed in the iron were left behind undisturbed. The wooden handle of the ax was in good condition. The metal was porous and irregular in shape, but in the general outlines preserved the form of the ax somewhat enlarged in size.

THE SINKS OF FLORIDA.

The sinks of Florida are numerous and one of the State's most attractive features to strangers visiting this part of the country. Around Alachua Lake, three miles south of Gainesville, there are hundreds of sink-holes of various sizes and depths. It is apparent from the existence of so many sinks that the whole country is honeycombed with subterranean passages. Portions of the land in that region have been sinking for ages.

Only a few years ago the ground around the track of the Florida Southern Railroad near Alachua Lake gave way, and in the darkness of night a train ran into a hole seventy or eighty feet deep. The train was completely wrecked, but fortunately all aboard escaped an untimely death.

There are sinks in various parts of Alachua County, but they are more numerous in the vicinity of what the Indians called "Big Jug," or Alachua, meaning the deep sinkholes through which the water in the lake at different periods has run out, leaving an immense savanna, or many thousands of acres of prairie land. Many years ago several acres of ground on the public road leading from this city to Newmansville sank and formed a lake, in which the tops of tall trees could be seen beneath the surface of the water. This spot is known as Blue Sink. Seven miles northwest of Gainesville is a mammoth sink known as the Devil's Mill Hopper. It is a great natural curiosity, and is a popular resort for picnic parties, as well as for pleasure seekers who during the winter season visit this part of Florida. One mile west of Gainesville is the Green Sink, containing a considerable volume of water, in which it has been the custom for many years for colored people to bathe, and many untimely deaths have occurred in this sink by drowning. A notable sink is that in which Hogtown Creek empties. About five miles southwest of this city the stream runs into this sinkhole and gradually disappears through a subterranean outlet. At this point quite a lake is formed, which is well filled with all species of fish known to inland Florida waters.

The natural bridge over the Sante Fe River, in the northeastern part of Alachua County, is one of Florida's unique and most interesting scenes, presenting the spectacle of a large stream sinking from view for a distance of several miles. All the streams in the San Felaska hummock, a large body of land a few miles west of Gainesville, disappear into underground passages. Most of the sinks are dry, but hundreds of them are well filled with water, flowing from springs. The depth of the sink-holes varies all the way from twenty-five feet down to where no bottom can be found.

The water in a sink hole three miles west of the Winter Park was measured a short time ago, and it was found to be 350 feet deep. The hole is 125 to 150 yards from side to side, and about forty feet in depth to the surface of the water at the bottom. From the top of the bank the water has the deep blue line of the ocean. The banks are so steep as to render descent and ascent somewhat difficult.

A MONSTER ORE DOCK

The world's largest ore dock is located at Duluth. It is 2,438 feet long or big enough, as the *Railway Age* puts it, "to dock two of the world's largest ships, the *Bismark* and the *Leviathan* end for end on either side. In constructing this dock over a million feet of piling was driven. The space surrounding the dock was enclosed in a cofferdam constructed of steel sheet piling. Then the space was unwatered and partially filled with sand. Finally a huge concrete slab was poured in which the ends of the piles were embedded to a depth of nine inches. The superstructure of the dock has 284 ore pockets with a capacity of 6,540 cubic feet each. In other words, each pocket will hold the contents of eight standard 50-ton ore cars so that the capacity of dock expressed in cars is 3,072, and in tons 153,600. Over 29,600 tons of steel were used in the construction of the dock which would require about 60,000 tons of ore, or less than half the capacity of the dock, and it would take less than half an hour to load this quantity of ore into boats. The new dock was placed in service on May 1st of this year.

TUNNEL TO TAKE SALT FROM DEAD SEA

They are about to do great things in ancient Palestine, now that the Turk has been driven from his stronghold and the country is to be opened to those to whom it rightly belongs, although none of the early settlers remain. Not only are they busy cleaning up the land that the Turk left in a rather dilapidated condition, but it is not unlikely that the clang of the trolley car and the rumble of the subway may be heard in the streets of venerable Jerusalem and its adjacent suburbs before very long. Elevated railroad structures will never be popular in that section because of the heat and the unsympathetic reflection from the ground, which is baked to a turn.

The possibility of a subway is not at all remote, however, for already an enterprising engineer, Albert Hiorth, a Norwegian irrigation expert, has put forward the project of constructing a tunnel designed to relieve the Dead Sea of some of its excessively salty and fetid waters and to bring the waters of the Mediterranean into the lower Jordan Valley and thus provide a vast stretch of land, that has held no close intercourse with vegetation in all its thousands of years of history, with electric light and power, part of which latter would be used for the irrigation of the one-time Wilderness.

It is a clear stretch of thirty-seven miles from east to west between the Mediterranean and the Dead Seat, at about 31:15 north latitude. The tunnel that Mr. Hiorth proposes is planned to pass under Jerusalem. The undermining of the ancient and sacred city is one of the audacious and ambitious points in a generally audacious and ambitious programme.

At the lower point of the Jordan Valley it is proposed to direct the Mediterranean waters through pipes down to the level of the Dead Sea and it must not be forgotten that this most remarkable of all inland seas is 1,202 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, with a percentage of salt so heavy that it absolutely prevents any one from sinking in it, although its suicide inviting depth in places is as much as 1,300 feet. But the low level of the Dead Sea is what Mr. Hiorth depends upon for the success of his scheme, for the tremendous fall of the Mediterranean waters would provide excellent power for his plant on the shores of the Dead Sea, with turbo-electric machinery transforming the water power into electricity, which is to be distributed as light and power throughout the country.

The irrigation part of the Hiorth programme is included in that part of the plan that provides for the regulation of the water supply above the Lake of Gennesareth out of the use of the water power plant on the shores of the Dead Sea. It is claimed by the Norwegian expert that his plan would obtain a water supply for the irrigation of some hundreds of thousands of acres.

THE MYSTERY OF THE THIRTEENTH SHIP

The "thirteenth ship" remains among the mysteries of the war. I have never heard any one to explain it, says "Jackstaff" in the London *Daily Mail*. Even the most matter-of-fact people appear content to state facts as they are known and leave it at that.

When the Norwegian convoy that was attacked by an enemy raiding force in November, 1917, left port it consisted of twelve ships. Later a thirteenth ship was added—or added itself. No one actually saw it join, no one in the end saw it leave.

Just before the fight Lieutenant Commander Fox, of the *Mary Rose*, counted and reported thirteen ships where there should have been only twelve. Thirteen there were at the beginning of the fray and only twelve when it ended. The stranger vanished as mysteriously as she appeared. At least that is what eye-witnesses say.

It will be within every one's recollection that the raid resulted disastrously for us. Among our losses was the *Mary Rose*, the vessel that first sighted and reported the thirteenth ship.

Can any one suggest an explanation of the occurrence? I have no theory to put forward. But here is a somewhat similar war happening within my own personal experience:

One evening in the Bay of Biscay four of us were standing on the bridge of a small warship watching the other vessels of the squadron.

"Look, there are three trawlers over there now," said one of my companions pointing to starboard.

"Impossible," declared the skipper through the chart house window. "All ships are in station and there are only two there. You can't see straight!"

"But there are three!" persisted the first speaker, and we others corroborated him, the signalman adding, "I can't make her out, sir; she doesn't seem to belong to our crowd."

Out from the chart house came the skipper and joined the little group who were watching the stranger. Whoever she might be or wherever she might have come from, the one undoubted fact was that there she lay, rolling steadily along between the "double-ender" and the tubby old trawler that had been our familiar companions during many days.

While we were speculating as to the stranger's identity our "spottie" gasped out an astonished "Why, she's gone!"

And gone she had! We looked carefully to see whether she had become hidden behind one of her companions. But no; the stranger disappeared as eerily as she came, and we could not understand how. Most of us attached little importance to the occurrence. The skipper took a different view of it.

"It wasn't a ship at all," he declared gravely, "but a warning that before the year is out the sea will claim one of us."

We laughed at his prophecy. Yet it is a fact that before the year was out the sea had claimed the man who first sighted the mysterious ship!

Is there any explanation?

BUTTONS PUT ON BY MACHINERY

In large manufacturing establishments buttons on shoes and on garments are no longer sewed on by hand. The work is done by a machine capable of sewing fifty-three hundred buttons on garments in nine hours. This is equal to the work of about eight expert sewers. A boy or girl can run the machine.

FASHION NOTES FROM SAMOA

R. M. Dalton, H. B. M. Trade Commissioner in New Zealand, sends the following notes from Western Samoa:

"The natives still live in native fashion, the adoption of European customs in the matter of houses and clothes being almost gentirely absent. Under ordinary circumstances the clothing of the men, and very often of the women, consists only of a lava lava (a loin cloth 44 by 72 inches) tied around the waist and falling to the knees. In the evenings and when in town the men often wear a singlet in addition to the lava lava, and on special occasions they frequently wear, in addition to the lava lava, a white coat similar to the coats worn by white men in the tropics. The men almost without exception never wear either shoes or socks; the women, too, rarely wear any covering for the feet.

"The kind of lava lava worn by the men depends on the occasion; for ordinary purposes they usually wear a jean, while for special occasions they may wear a white drill or a special cashmere. The same is true of the women to some extent. During the day and in their ordinary occupations the women frequently wear nothing but the lava lava, but it is not unusual for them to wear a short cape of some dark material and probably of cashmere over their shoulders and covering the upper part of their bodies. In the evenings and in the towns, however, they usually wear a chemise and a kind of overall above the lava lava. The native women are excellent dressmakers, and some of their frocks are both expensive and attractive.

"The main points to remember regarding the natives of Samoa are that they are generally well-to-do; they always have at hand a ready means for increasing their income if such an increase is desired for any reason.

"The cashmere trade is of particular interest, in that it was in this trade that Germany did what was probably her biggest business in this section. The article for which a great demand existed was a cotton cashmere with a poplin effect on the back; the most salable colors were black, blue-black, and wine color, but it was also supplied in other self colors and in stripes. In addition to the shades already mentioned, ecru, maroon, pink, brown and purple were popular. The material should be at least forty-two inches wide and the selvage should be the same color as the piece, i.e., not gray. The most important essential, however, is that colors should be fast; the Samoans wash their clothes a great deal, and as a general rule it was found that while other dyes often gave out, the German dyes, particularly in these cashmeres, were almost always fast."

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People wonder how it is that actresses and actors maintain their graceful figures, their buoyancy and litheness when the tendency is to become stout.

The popular theory that these heroines and heroes of the stage and the movies follow rigid systems of self-starvation (fasting) and strenuous exercising is erroneous. If they were to do this they could not be so vigorous or supple. They would be unfit for their duties.

Neither can these performers take drastic drugs, such as thyroid extract, salts purgatives, etc., for reducing their weight for those are injurious and weakening.

There is a very efficacious self-treatment known as the Korein system which consists in taking a harmless vegetable compound oil and following simple directions. The name of this oil is Oil of Korein. For convenience it is put up in little capsules easy to swallow. They give the breath a delightful aromatic odor.

By following this method, the superfluous fat may be eliminated without causing any wrinkles. Indeed, the flesh becomes firm, while the skin is kept white and velvety.

If you find yourself too stout, you should lose no time in getting a small box of Oil of Korein. Most drug stores sell it. With each box is a $100 cash refund guarantee of assured weight reduction if the easy directions are followed.

When you have lost whatever surplus adiposity you desire, it will be easy for you to maintain a graceful, slender figure. By the Korein system persons have reduced from five to sixty pounds, according to their requirements of beauty.

There is usually a wonderful improvement in the health and mind. Irritability disappears and is replaced by cheerfulness. You see things in an optimistic light, your efficiency is developed—you are your real self. Surely this is better for you than to have your beauty spoiled by gross fatness. Enjoy life and hold the esteem of others.

A booklet is published called "Reduce Weight Happily" which will be mailed free (in plain wrapper) if you write to Korein Company, ND-101, Station F, New York, N. Y. You would do well to obtain this treatise, for it contains much information of value to you—if you are overstout, or if you are gradually becoming so. Correspondence is confidential.

If you have a friend who has tried in vain to reduce weight by dieting, tedious exercises, taking strong doses of purgatives, or other unsatisfactory methods you will do a lifelong favor by calling attention to this—the true and genuine method.

To Men who are Bald or are Losing Their Hair

Let me tell you of my own case.

I was almost completely bald, and as I had tried many tonics, lotions, etc., without benefit, I expected to remain bald for the rest of my life.

But instead of baldness, I now have a complete growth of hair upon my head. This is all the more remarkable because I am 66 years old.

The way that I obtained a perfect hair growth was as simple as it was astonishing to me.

While traveling I met an old Cherokee Indian who gave me a pomade or ointment to use upon my scalp. Although my confidence was meager, I used this compound. He told me it contained selected components from the Three Kingdoms of Nature.

After several applications my looking-glass revealed a slight fuzz. This developed from day to day to a healthy growth of hair. Imagine my satisfaction in being able actually to brush the hair where there had been a bare scalp! Yet it was true. Soon I was able to comb it—and I have been able to do so ever since.

I traded with the old Indian savant, obtaining the recipe. It was crude and the ointment was almost nauseating. So I had it modernized, by a practical chemist, holding to the original principle, and now from the recipe a cosmetic pomade is prepared. Men and women have used it—and many are now doing so. In numerous cases remarkable results are being reported.

This ointment contains no alcohol nor anything else that has a tendency to dry the hair, the scalp or the roots.

The way for you to prove what it will do for you is to try it. I will mail you the recipe free of charge. Your own physician will tell you that it is safe and you may obtain a supply from the druggist. Or you may get it from me. It is called Kotalko. A proof box will be mailed, with the recipe, if you send 10 cents, silver or stamps, to John Hart Brittain, 150 East Thirty-second St., BB-101, New York, N. Y. This is a genuine announcement devoid of the lavish phraseology of the usual advertisements, but it means exactly what it says, and I, being a business man of good reputation, stand ready to prove it to you.

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You have been losing your hair. It comes out on the comb or brush. The steady loss, as well as the fact that your hair is becoming thinner and weaker, is worrying you.

You have tried different lotions, tonics, washes, etc., that were recommended or which you saw advertised. None of these have done you any good. They were not the right remedy for your hair.

Well, dear Madam, here is a message of good cheer. It comes from a man.

Years ago when I was almost entirely bald I came across an old Cherokee Indian who induced me to try his recipe for growing hair. He told me that the principle of this formula was used by all Indians, male and female, wherever they found a need of it.

You know that Indian women (and men too) have long, beautiful hair.

So I tried the recipe. The compound was an ointment for the scalp. It had a bad odor and was rather nasty. But my hair grew—and has continued to grow. Since then I have never had any trouble with my hair. At the age of 66 I now possess an abundant growth and visit the barber each month to have it cut. Once, after an accident, when I was compelled to remain in the hospital for several weeks, it grew so long that it was like a woman's flourishing hair growth.

The recipe I obtained from the old Indian savant and it has been used by many others. I have had the formula modernized by a practical chemist so that the pomade ointment now has a more pleasant odor and is more agreeable to apply to the scalp and base of the hair.

It contains no alcohol nor any of those ingredients which tend to dry the hair, scalp and roots. On the contrary, it is a fortifying compound. The Indian principle is that it must contain elements from the three natural kingdoms. This rule is maintained in the recipe.

I want you to try this pomade on your scalp. It can be applied when retiring each night, only a few moments being required. It is likely you will find a very satisfactory result, almost from the outset.

Now make no mistake; this is not a lovely scented preparation. There's nothing fancy about it. The name is Kotaiko and you shall have the recipe free of cost by writing for it. Your druggist can supply the pomade according to the recipe; or you may obtain the compound from me, ready to use. Send me your name and address. The recipe will come free. If you would like a proof box of the cosmetic, enclose 10 cents, silver or stamps. My address is: John Hart Brittain, BD-101, 150 East Thirty-second St., New York, N. Y.

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